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Annals of **WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal
Winter 2002 Vol. 74, No. 1



The Cover Art

Early Storm,
a watercolor
by Merritt Dana Houghton

This image illustrates the unpredictability of spring time weather in Wyoming. Snowstorms during the three-month spring calving season are a major hazard for ranching families. It is not unheard of for temperatures to reach a high of 72 degrees during the day, with a low of 17 that night. Severe weather can result in disastrous losses of young livestock.

The artist, Merritt Dana Houghton (b. 1846-d. 1919), settled in Laramie in 1875 and later lived in both Encampment and Saratoga. The artist executed many pen and ink drawings of historic forts and stage stations. He also recorded in drawings numerous ranches, mines and towns of his time. The Wyoming State Museum holds the largest known collection of Houghton's work, which includes both pen and ink drawings and watercolors. This collection allows a glimpse of our past and provides a valuable record of Wyoming at the turn of the century.

--Dominique Schultes, Curator of Art, Wyoming State Museum

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the "Wyoming Memories" section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in "Wyoming Memories" also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071, or to the editor by e-mail at the following address: annals@uwyo.edu

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DISCOVERING HER STRENGTH

THE REMARKABLE TRANSFORMATION OF NELLIE TAYLOE ROSS

BY
LORI
VAN PELT

On Jan. 5, 1925, a slender woman dressed in a simple black dress and black hat with upturned brim took the arm of her brother and approached the dais of the Senate Chamber in the State Capitol in Cheyenne, Wyoming. For the first time in the history of the Equality State, a woman governor would present an inaugural address. Nellie Tayloe Ross's election as Wyoming's chief executive bestowed an additional title. She became the first woman in the United States to be elected the governor of a state.¹



Facing Wyoming lawmakers at the inaugural ceremony marked the first such public address of Nellie Ross' life. Prior to her election, her only speaking experience amounted to addressing a kindergarten class and presenting informative papers at meetings of her local women's group. From this inauspicious beginning, she honed her speaking skills into her most remarkable asset during her tenure as governor. Her dedication and perseverance in improving her public speaking skills benefited not only the State of Wyoming but Nellie herself.²

But on the day of her inaugural, the curious, standing-room-only crowd remained silent. No one spoke or cheered when she entered the room, certainly not the customary greeting for an incoming governor. The recently widowed woman wore black and had requested a simple ceremony out of respect for her late husband. William Bradford Ross had died of complications due to appendicitis surgery on Oct. 2, 1924. He had been serving as Wyoming's governor at the time of his death.³

Because William Ross' death occurred so near to an upcoming election, the state held a special election to choose a replacement for the last two years of his term. Dr. J. L. Hylton, chairman of the Wyoming Democratic Party, asked Nellie to run for his office. She had no experience, but Nellie and her husband had been close confidants. Throughout William's career, first as an attorney and then as governor, they often discussed political and legal questions. Nellie was elected in November by a wide margin, defeating Republican candidate Eugene J. Sullivan.⁴

Acting Governor Frank Lucas (the Secretary of State) introduced her. Nellie began, "My friends," she said, in a steady, low-pitched voice, with a slight Southern accent, "owing to the tragic and unprecedented circumstances which surround my induction into office, I have felt it not only unnecessary but inappropriate for me now to enter into such a discussion of policies as usually constitutes an inaugural address." People in the front row leaned forward to hear her almost inaudible words. She continued, saying, "This occasion does not mark the beginning of a new administration, but rather the resumption of that which was inaugurated in this chamber two years ago."⁵

Many of Nellie's family members attended the event. Her brother, Judge Samuel Tayloe of San Antonio, Texas, escorted her. Nellie's sister-in-law, Mrs. George (Nelle) Tayloe of Memphis, Tenn., sat with Nellie's sons, George and 12-year-old Bradford, just behind the dais. Nellie's other son, Ambrose, George's twin, was working in New Mexico. In her grief, Nellie had neglected to make arrangements in time for Ambrose to attend, a fact

that caused her "poignant regret." As a result, some sources incorrectly reported she had only two sons, an error repeated throughout her term. Also among the group of onlookers was Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard, well-respected Wyoming historian and staunch suffragette.⁶

Nellie's first legislative address, delivered to Wyoming's predominantly Republican 18th Legislature on January 15, was based on William's policies. She stated, "...preparation [of this address] has been facilitated not alone by such knowledge of the state's problems as I had the privilege of gaining during the past two years from association with the Governor, my husband, but also by the extensive notes which he had already assembled and designated to be embodied in his message to you."⁷

She relied heavily on William's ideas but Nellie displayed her own grit during her appearance before this joint session of Wyoming legislators. For example, if she needed a reminder that everything he did and said was of national interest, she got one. The *Denver Post* carried her speech before she presented it. Nellie's legislative address had been erroneously released to a press agency prior to the opening of the legislative session. She learned of the mistake from a friend who telephoned her the night before she was scheduled to speak to Wyoming's lawmakers.

¹ *Wyoming State Tribune and Cheyenne State Leader*, 5 January 1925; Grace Raymond Hebard Collection 8, Box 3, Folder 1, correspondence, American Heritage Center (hereafter AHC), University of Wyoming, Laramie. Miriam Ferguson of Texas was elected governor of her state prior to Nellie's election because the Texas primaries were held in August 1924. However, Nellie's inaugural preceded Miriam's and thus Nellie became known as the nation's first woman governor.

² *Wyoming Eagle*, 19 July 1925. Called Nellie "the best advertisement the state has ever had."

³ *New York Times*, 6 January 1925; Nellie Tayloe Ross, "The Governor Lady," *Good Housekeeping* (September 1927), 211. *Riverton Review*, 9 October 1924.

⁴ Eugene J. Sullivan, former speaker of Wyoming's House of Representatives, was a Casper attorney, former mayor of Basin, Wyoming, and an oilman and farmer in Big Horn County. T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 2nd edition, revised, 1978), 457.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 457; Brown, Mabel, ed. "Nellie Tayloe Ross: First Lady and First Woman Governor," *First Ladies of Wyoming 1869-1990* (Cheyenne: Wyoming Commission for Women, 1990), 1; Ross, "The Governor Lady," *Good Housekeeping* (August 1927), 118, 120; *Wyoming State Tribune and Cheyenne State Leader*, 5 January 1925.

⁶ Hebard and Ross were friends. Hebard had campaigned for Nellie's election. See Nellie Tayloe Ross to Hebard, 24 October 1924; Nellie Tayloe Ross Collection 948, Box 2, Correspondence, Safe Letters 1924-1953, AHC.

⁷ Larson, 457; Ross, "The Governor Lady," September 1927, 37; *House Journal*, Eighteenth State Legislature of Wyoming 1925, 26; *Wyoming State Tribune and Cheyenne State Leader*, 5 January 1925.

Before the governor spoke, Senate President Lewis H. Brown read two telegrams to his colleagues. M. F. Dacey, manager of the International News Service, wired his regrets about the incident, attributing the error to an “unfortunate misunderstanding on part of time it was to be delivered.” W. C. Shepherd, managing editor of the *Denver Post*, also sent an apology for his newspaper publishing Nellie’s address in one edition. He explained the news service had first told the *Post* Nellie’s message was to be delivered on Wednesday, but less than an hour after the paper had been printed, the service announced her speech was to be made on Thursday instead.⁸

Though the mistaken release was regrettable, Nellie’s address became most notable for what was not included. Suffragettes and others curious as to what exactly a woman governor would do perhaps expected a lengthy pronouncement on the abilities of women and announcements of female appointments to come. Nellie forged ahead with other issues of the day. Tax reduction and banking difficulties facing the state were of the utmost importance to the new governor. She asked legislators to pass safety laws to help coal miners, advocated the federal Child Labor Law, included information on the budget and state oil royalties, and reported she was a staunch supporter of Prohibition and expected that law to be rigidly enforced. She mentioned women only in connection with her views on the welfare of all wage-earners in the state. She advocated legislation for the protection of “those women who are engaged in industry,” saying that men had the right to an “unqualified eight-hour day,” and explaining, “I feel sure this Legislature will not refuse to women the same protection and privileges granted to men.”⁹

In February 1925, she made her first “official” speech as Governor of Wyoming. *Collier’s Weekly* presented the Collier Trophy to the State of Wyoming for achieving “the largest proportionate increase in 1924 over four years ago of any state in the Presidential vote.” Two representatives from the magazine attended the ceremony. Nellie deemed the Collier award “significant of progress and growth and of the superior intellect of the men and women who compose the citizenship of Wyoming.” Of the award, Nellie said, “We find ourselves proud winners in a contest before we are scarcely aware that we were participants and with little conscious effort on our part. How satisfactory it would be if all the contests in life could be won in such a pleasant way!” In a letter to her brother, George, she admitted her anxiety about giving the speech, writing, “Such as it was I delivered it without manuscript or notes of any kind.”¹⁰

Nellie attacked her public speaking anxiety by study-

ing her topics so thoroughly she didn’t need notes. Her ability to speak without notes became her trademark. She often wrote her speeches in longhand, but trained herself to become so familiar with their content that she didn’t need reminders. In this, she credited her experiences as a member of the Cheyenne Women’s Club. Members of that group often presented papers on a variety of topics to each other to further their educational and cultural goals. Reading aloud, a beloved activity for the Ross family, became another informal training method. Nellie and Will began this practice early in their marriage. Reading aloud developed Nellie’s voice and trained her mind. Allusions to Shakespeare, the Bible, and mythology often appear in her speeches.

This casual training gave her a good foundation for public speaking. Many more talks, presented to a variety of audiences—local, regional, and national—would be expected. In March 1925, Nellie attended the inaugural ceremonies of Republican President Calvin Coolidge. The *Woman Citizen* reported, “[Nellie’s] poise was excellent, her appearance splendid, her stories good, and her speeches modest but full of fact as well as spirit. She was not the ‘shy, timid, little Governor’ journalists tried to preconceive her. She resented such description....”¹¹

Nellie’s presence was so much in demand that she received as many as six invitations daily during her term. While in Washington, she spoke to the National Women’s Democratic Club on March 7, 1925, at its first anniversary dinner. Nellie’s views were perhaps best encapsulated in a single sentence of her talk. She said, “there never was a suggestion... that if a woman were elected she would conduct her administration with less concern for the welfare of the whole state than for that of women in particular.” Her suggestions that women cooperate with men rather than issue “militant demands” to achieve desired political results and that women rely on the advice of more knowledgeable men undoubtedly irked the suffragettes.¹²

Nellie herself relied on the advice of men at the top

⁸ *Senate Journal of the Eighteenth State Legislature of Wyoming*, 24; Ross, “The Governor Lady,” (September 1927), 212.

⁹ *House Journal of the Eighteenth State Legislature of Wyoming* 1925, 32. Nellie’s address is on pp. 26-34 of the *House Journal*.

¹⁰ Nellie Tayloe Ross, “On Presentation of Collier Trophy,” February 1925. Nellie Tayloe Ross Collection 948 (hereafter NTR 948), Box 3, Folder 1920-1953 (3) Speeches. AHC; Nellie Tayloe Ross to George Tayloe, 14 February 1925. NTR 948, Box 1, Correspondence Professional 1924-1926. AHC.

¹¹ Ross, “The Governor Lady,” (August 1927), 120; *Woman Citizen*, 21 March 1925.

¹² Ross, “The Governor Lady,” (October 1927), 73; NTR 948, Box 3, Speeches 1920-1953, Folder 1. AHC.

echelons of Wyoming's Democratic Party, friends of Will's, men who had much more political savvy than she. Nellie's goal was to serve the residents of the state of Wyoming in such a manner that no one would be able to say that she had not done as good a job as a man would have done. Her advisors, dubbed the "Kitchen Cabinet," included U. S. Senator John B. Kendrick, Attorney General David Howell, Avery Haggard, Leslie Miller, S. G. Hopkins, and Tracy McCracken. McCracken served as William's secretary and as Kendrick's secretary and, eventually, became editor of the *Wyoming Eagle*. Probably closest to Nellie was Joseph C. O'Mahoney, a long-time family friend and attorney. She confided to her brother, George, that O'Mahoney was "smartest of them all."¹³

In May 1925, Nellie gave her first radio address. KOA radio in Denver broadcast her promotional talk for the upcoming 29th annual Cheyenne Frontier Days. The broadcast was heard across the nation and even beyond the East Coast. Sailors on the steamship *Mauritania*, traveling from England to the United States, heard her discuss "the thrill of that epic conquest of the prairie by the

pioneers" and "the bucking broncho [sic], wild, untamed Pegasus of the plains—mounted and mastered by the cowboy...."¹⁴

That same month, she took time during a train trip from Cheyenne to Sheridan to write her son, Ambrose, a long, cheery letter about her activities as governor. Among them were an upcoming address to the Wyoming Stock Growers Association in Douglas and a speech to a group of 2,000 Shriners who were visiting Cheyenne. She also had just been invited to give the response to the welcoming address at the Conference of Gover-

¹³ Larson, 460. Larson stated that Nellie admitted in an interview with him that she relied on O'Mahoney and Howell mostly. O'Mahoney was appointed to fill the United States Senate seat of John B. Kendrick in 1933. T. A. Larson, interview with author, Laramie, Wyoming, 17 July 1996; Nellie Tayloe Ross to George Tayloe, 30 August 1925, Brown Palace Hotel, Denver, Colorado, NTR 948-97-10-07, Box 10, Correspondence: Kaye Tayloe Collins, AHC; *Wyoming Eagle*, 24 January 1926; Ross, "The Governor Lady," (October 1927), 72.

¹⁴ Ross, Nellie Tayloe, "Frontier Day Speech," 18 May 1925, NTR 948, Box 3, Speeches 1920-53 (3), AHC; *Wyoming State Tribune and Cheyenne State Leader*, 19 May 1925.



Gov. Nellie Tayloe Ross speaks to a crowd at the dedication ceremonies for the completion of the Snowy Range road. One of her biggest challenges in public office was to overcome the anxiety of public speaking.

nors in Maine. She asked if Ambrose heard her KOA broadcast, remarking that the Denver Women's Press Club had given her "the loveliest reception," and saying, "I had to beg off from other organizations."

Publicly, she tackled her speaking chores with a businesslike demeanor, but her letter, written prior to her keynote address at the annual opening of Yellowstone National Park in June, provides some insight into her true feelings. She wrote, "Ambrose, that is the one thing about this office I don't like—this eternal speech making. It will either develop my mind though, or ruin it so I'll be ready for an institution, soon. Really the strain of applying myself to so many subjects is terrible."

When Nellie addressed the Wyoming Stock Growers Association convention, she used the opportunity to present her ideas on tax reform. She believed too much property was going untaxed and that the state should be receiving that revenue. Her opinion didn't generate as much attention as the governor herself did. The *Omaha Bee* stated, "[S]he made a complete conquest of the visiting commission men and packers from Omaha and Chicago, as well as of the cattle growers of the state."¹⁵

In late June, she delivered the response to the welcoming address at the annual Conference of Governors in Maine. The *Portland (Maine) Press* reported she appeared "quite at ease" but that she had to raise her "sweet and well modulated voice" to be heard in the large conference room. She invited the governors to visit Wyoming, saying, "You, who are unacquainted with the West, would I feel sure, find fascinating interest and a surprising revelation in its natural beauty, in its diversity of resources, and best of all, in the spirit of its people."

Nellie charmed not only her audience but many local reporters as well. The July 6, 1925, issue of the Casper Herald carried a report from the *Portland Evening Express* by reporter Helen Havener. She wrote, "Governor Ross appears to have the first essential qualification for executive office either in an imperturbable temperament or a wonderful gift of counterfeiting good humor whether she feels it or not..."¹⁶

Despite the fact Nellie generated positive publicity on a national level, some Wyoming newspapers criticized her. In July, 1925, the *Kemmerer Gazette*, a Republican newspaper, chided the governor for attending the Yellowstone opening and the Maine governors' conference because of the expenses involved. The *Torrington Telegram* criticized her attendance at President Coolidge's inauguration, accusing Nellie of riding in a private rail car paid for by the State while explaining that the President rode in an ordinary Pullman. The *Cowley Progress* accused her of attending Miriam "Ma" Ferguson's inauguration as governor of Texas. She

hadn't even attended that event. She had sent a telegram.

The *Wyoming Eagle*, always a staunch defender, scolded the *Gazette*'s editor and stated that Wyoming governors had attended the governors' conference "ever since it was first established by President [Theodore] Roosevelt." Wyoming governors received a \$500 appropriation from the Legislature to attend. With tongue-in-cheek, the *Eagle* editorialized, "Mrs. Ross is a woman and she ought to know enough to stay at home." The newspaper explained that Nellie responded to the President's inaugural invitation as a mark of respect, and retorted, "It was a great mistake for her to pay the expense herself." The *Eagle* also called her "the best advertisement the state has ever had."¹⁷

In a letter to her brother George she explained her hectic schedule and revealed its toll. Nellie wrote, "I have now hanging over me seven or eight speeches—Isn't it awful for one who never said a word in public till a few months ago?" Her schedule included three speaking engagements in Casper on Labor Day weekend, with attendance of 1,500 expected at one event. "Then I'm to go on and speak at a county fair—after that to the Woman's Fed [sic] of Clubs—the State WCTU, etc., etc. and so it goes!" She confessed, "At times I do get so tired and so harassed that I feel my burden is almost too great but I get restored and go on."

On Jan. 23, 1924, she attended the National Western Stock Show in Denver, for "Wyoming Day." She spoke at a luncheon held in her honor by the Business and Professional Women's Club bureau. A comment she made to a Denver reporter showed that even after holding office for a year, Nellie remained insecure about public speaking. She said, "I am much more at home attending to the duties of office than I am wandering around making speeches, but a certain amount of that is necessary, I presume."¹⁸

She kept her anxieties in check, however. In April, Nellie spoke to a large crowd in Lingle, Wyoming, for a Parent-Teacher Association gathering. The *Fort Laramie Scout* congratulated her for inspiring "a feeling of

¹⁵ Nellie Tayloe Ross to Ambrose Ross, Burlington Route, National Park Line, 24 May 1925, NTR 948, Box 2, Folder 1, AHC; *Wyoming Eagle*, 2 August 1925; 9 August 1925.

¹⁶ *Casper Herald*, 6 July 1925.

¹⁷ *Wyoming Eagle*, 7 June 1925; 14 June 1925; 19 July 1925; 26 July 1925; Ouida Ferguson Nalle, *The Fergusons of Texas* (San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1946); William B. Ross, Wyoming State Budget 1923-1924, 8 January 1923, *Wyoming State Budget, 1921-1931*, Wyoming State Library.

¹⁸ *Wyoming Eagle*, 24 January 1926; Nellie Tayloe Ross to George Tayloe, 30 August 1925, Brown Palace Hotel, Denver, Colorado, NTR 948-97-10-07, Box 10, Correspondence: Kaye Tayloe Collins, AHC.

THE FIRST WOMAN GOVERNOR

Wyoming's Governor

THE WOMAN WHO MADE GOOD



NELLIE TAYLOE ROSS

Businesslike—Able—Courageous. She Has Earned Re-election

Campaign poster for Governor Ross' re-election campaign, 1926

confidence...a feeling that was a pleasant surprise to many of those who were seeing her for the first time."

The Governor, an honorary Girl Scout, addressed scouts in Rock Springs that same month. She said, "I'm old-fashioned enough...to believe that no career for women is as glorious or satisfying as that which wifehood and motherhood offer, and it is there [a woman] fulfills her highest destiny." Though she often used the theme that marriage and motherhood were women's "highest destiny," she did not disparage career women. While speaking to the May convention of the Business and Professional Women's Club in Casper, Nellie said, "Practically every vocation is now open to a woman, and she has proved she can fill her position with absolute success."¹⁹

On Labor Day, 1926, the governor appeared in Casper to give a keynote speech and ended up "saving the day."

The *Wyoming Eagle* ran a two-column story about the event, attended by about 1,200 people. The emcee welcomed the crowd and then asked the pianist to play *America* so that everyone could sing together. What he did not know, however, was that no pianist had been provided. The *Eagle* reported: "He was in a quandary, but only for a moment or two, for from the platform from which he was speaking the gentle voice of a lady modestly suggested that if no one else could be found she would be glad to furnish the accompaniment on piano." The "gentle voice," of course, was Governor Ross's, and the fact that she could play came as a surprise to most people.²⁰

In mid-September, with the election approaching, Nellie braved another level of speech-making, as she faced the challenge of campaign talks. She hit the campaign trail with Senator Kendrick in swings throughout the southern and eastern portions of the state. Following their joint kick-off, they traveled separately. In late October, Nellie appeared in Pine Bluffs, Burns, Jay Em, and Lusk with "the largest crowds in history" greeting her.²¹ She often appeared with W. S. Kimball, the Democratic candidate for Secretary of State, who traveled with his wife.

Nellie closed her campaign on Nov. 1, 1926, with a rally and public meeting at Cheyenne's Capitol Theatre. The *Eagle* reported that Nellie's campaign was marked "by the largest, and doubtless the most enthusiastic crowds that have ever greeted any Wyoming candidate for state or Congressional office."²²

Voters displayed less enthusiasm. She lost her bid for re-election by only 1,365 votes. She was so distraught over the loss that she asked Tracy McCracken to write to her brother, Alfred Tayloe, to explain what had happened. McCracken noted a number of factors contributing to her defeat, including the "very strong machine" of the Re-

¹⁹ *Wyoming Eagle*, April-May 1926.

²⁰ *Casper Herald*, 10 September 1926.

²¹ *Wyoming Eagle*, 1 October - 29 October 1926.

²² *Casper Herald*, 24 September 1926; *Eagle*, September-October 1926; November 1926.

publicans. Wyoming's elderly Republican U. S. Senator Francis E. Warren's health also became a factor, as Republicans feared that, if re-elected, Nellie might appoint a Democrat to his seat if his health failed.

McCraken did not mention the fact that suffragettes had been disturbed by the small number of appointments of women that Nellie had made during her two years in office. But that factor annoyed at least one feminist—a woman who had strongly supported her during the 1924 election. Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard hinted at the dissatisfaction of the suffragettes in her letter to Carrie Chapman Catt, at that time, the chief contributing editor to the *Woman Citizen*. Hebard wrote that she believed the "outstanding reason" for Nellie's defeat "was due to the advisors that Governor Ross selected, all men."

Nellie's political defeat did not end her speech-making responsibilities. On Nov. 22, 1926, she spoke at the dedication ceremonies for the Gimbel Brothers department store in Philadelphia. She reiterated some of her remarks to the Girl Scouts months before and suggested women seeking careers in business were raising the moral standard in their industries. In Syracuse, New York, she addressed the League of Women Voters and attended a meeting protesting a nuisance tax in New York as a special guest of Gov. Al Smith. At that meeting, Nellie said, "corrupt control of political affairs can exist only so long as women consent to it" contending that "women have the numbers and they have the power to thwart it."²³

Even though she considered speech-making one of her most arduous tasks when she first assumed office as Wyoming's governor, her increasing skill and growing confidence transformed this tedious duty into a promising new career. On Dec. 31, 1926, the *Eagle* broke the news that Nellie had accepted a ten-week summer contract with the prestigious Swarthmore Chautauqua Circuit, headquartered in Pennsylvania. The Swarthmore Chautauquas were run by Paul Pearson, professor of rhetoric at Swarthmore College and the father of author/columnist Drew Pearson. Chautauquas were educational lectures, musical programs, puppet shows, and children's programs. The *Eagle* stated, "Of particular interest to Wyomingites, in this connection, is the fact that it is on the Swarthmore Chautauqua circuit that the late William Jennings Bryan, silver-tongued orator, made most of his Chautauqua speeches." Nellie's contract was considered among the "very best contracts offered by the bureau." she would not comment on the salary she had accepted, but the newspaper estimated that the single ten-week contract would far surpass her annual \$12,000 salary as governor of Wyoming.²⁴

Before she embarked on these new oratorical adventures, she had another official speech to give—the opening address at the inaugural of Governor-elect Frank C. Emerson. In her remarks on Jan. 7, 1927, she said, "As I relinquish now the responsibilities of the executive office, I render acknowledgement to the people of Wyoming of the debt of gratitude I owe them, that through their grace, mine has been the privilege of serving them as their governor. However great or however limited has been the benefit of that service, it has been one consecrated to a single and unfailing purpose, and that has been the advancement of their welfare. It is a service in which I have found great joy and interest for however exacting at times have been the duties of the office, they have never been irksome...."²⁵

As Wyoming residents welcomed a new administration, Nellie Tayloe Ross celebrated new confidence. She turned a weakness into a strength, failing only in the sense of losing the re-election to the governorship, but emerging victorious as a speaker of national renown. She had proved equal to her task.

²³ Vote totals are in Virginia Cole Trenholm, ed. *Wyoming Blue Book*, II. Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Dept., 1974). The final election tally was Emerson 35.651; Ross, 34.286; and William B. Guthrie, radical, 104; T.S. McCraken to Alfred Tayloe, 11 November 1926, NTR 948, Box 1, Correspondence Professional 1924-1926, AHC; *Wyoming Eagle*, 12 November 1926; 19 November 1926; 26 November 1926; Hebard to Carrie Chapman Catt, 9 November 1926, Hebard Collection 8, Box 3, Correspondence, AHC.

²⁴ *Wyoming Eagle*, 24 December 1926, 31 December 1926; Mary Ellen Chijoike, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, telephone interview with author, 10 February 1999; William B. Ross, Wyoming State Budget 1923-1924, 8 January 1923, *Wyoming State Budget*, 1921-1931, Wyoming State Library.

²⁵ *Wyoming Eagle*, 7 January 1927.

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ROBERT FOOTE: A FORGOTTEN WYOMING PIONEER

By Murray L. Carroll



Robert Foote

WPA Photographic Collection,
Wyoming State Archives,
Dept. of State Parks and
Cultural Resources

In July 1999 a new system of wind turbine electric power generators, consisting of 105 units divided into three fields, went into operation in southeastern Wyoming. The location of the units is close to the old Rock Creek station on the Overland Stage trail. Since the fields are located on Foote Creek Ridge, they were designated at "Foote Creek One," "Foote Creek Two," and "Foote Creek Three." In an indirect, and most probably unin-

tentional way, they memorialize Robert Foote, an almost forgotten Wyoming pioneer. In 1865, Robert "Uncle Bobby" Foote, post trader at Fort Halleck, opened a store where the Overland Trail crossed the creek that came to bear his name. Later, he established a ranch in the creek valley.

Foote was born Feb. 2, 1834, in Dundee, Forfarshire, Scotland. He spent his childhood and early youth in

Dundee, where he received his education. There is no record of how much formal schooling he had, however. From his activities in later life, it seems he had a respectable education for the time. Upon completing his schooling, he apprenticed with a tailor. When he became a full-fledged craftsman in his trade in 1856, he emigrated to New York. He was 22 years old.¹

Lt. Thomas Hight, recruiting officer for the 2nd United States Dragoons in Chicago, enlisted Foote on Feb. 24, 1857, who had just turned 23, into the dragoon regiment for a five-year term.² From Chicago, Foote went to the Mounted Services Recruit Depot at Carlisle Barracks, Pa.³ He was outfitted with his uniforms and personal equipment, taught basic drill, military courtesy, and military discipline.⁴

In May, Foote completed his depot stint, and was assigned to "F" Company, 2nd U.S. Dragoons, at Fort Riley, Kansas. "F" Company was part of the troops assigned to try and keep the peace in "Bloody Kansas."⁵ In June, all of the companies of the 2nd Dragoons were ordered to Fort Leavenworth from the outposts where they were stationed. Reorganized, re-equipped, and with enough recruits to be brought up to full strength, the 2nd Dragoons' new assignment was as the mounted unit for the Utah Expedition. The expedition, being organized at Fort Leavenworth, had the mission to invade Utah Territory, put down the rebellion supposedly brewing there, then serve at the call of the new governor as a *posse comitatus* to help enforce the law and maintain order.

At the time, Fort Leavenworth, and the town of Leavenworth, which was founded just three years earlier, were wild. A second lieutenant, freshly graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, was assigned to the 2nd Dragoons as one of the replacement officers. He arrived at Fort Leavenworth about the same time as Foote's company. He wrote:

Sometimes we would visit the town of Leavenworth, and if we chanced to remain after dark would set out for the fort at a sweeping gallop to diminish the chance of being hit should someone take a crack at us—not that we feared anything from personal enemies, but simply because it was not wise to take any chances.—So frequent were assassinations that each man traveling on the prairie, as soon as he perceived another approach him, slipped his six-shooter to have it most conveniently at hand. Of course, the flap of the holster, placed to protect the pistol from rain, had long before been cut off. It was preferable to suffer a little rust on the weapon rather than run the risk of losing a fraction of a second in drawing it.⁶

Evidently Foote had no trouble adjusting to the new life on the frontier, and in the 2nd Dragoons. While he was at Fort Leavenworth waiting for the expedition to

organize, he took out United States citizenship. His unit stayed in Kansas longer than anticipated. The first elements of the Utah Expedition started leaving Fort Leavenworth on July 18. The Governor of Kansas asked President Buchanan that Brevet Brig. Gen. W. S. Harney, commander of the 2nd Dragoons, and the commander designate of the Utah expedition, with the regiment, be retained in Kansas at least through the summer to restore order in Lawrence, and elsewhere in Kansas.

Six companies of the 2nd Dragoons, including Foote's "F" Company, finally left Fort Leavenworth the afternoon of September 17, under the command of Lt. Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, the assistant regimental commander. They were serving as rear guard for the column, as well as escorting the new Governor of Utah and the other newly-appointed civil and judicial officials and their families. Not surprisingly, the column was encumbered by a large baggage train. Because of the carriages of the civilians and the baggage train, it could not make good time. Under the best of circumstances, they had started too late in the year to reach Utah before the onset of winter. The California-Oregon trail, the route of march, was often snowed in by mid-October. They reached Fort Laramie on October 23. Grass was scarce, and the wind and snow made travel difficult. When they camped at Pacific Springs, the thermometers registered 13 degrees below zero; the next night, they froze and burst. They finally reached the burned-out remains of Fort Bridger on November 19. The first elements of the expedition had arrived just two days earlier, and were busy trying to construct winter quarters out of logs and adobe. The dragoons still had 144 horses, but between Fort Laramie and Fort Bridger, the regiment lost all but ten to cold, hunger, and exhaustion.⁷

¹Mrs. Charles (Olive Herman) Ellis. "Robert Foote," *Annals of Wyoming* 15 (January, 1943), 50.

²National Archives, Old Military and Civil Records, Textual Archives Services Division. *Robert Foote Enlistment Documents*, Chicago, Illinois, Feb. 24, 1857.

³Theophilis Rodenbough. *From Everglade to Canyon with the Second United States Cavalry*. (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1875 [reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000]), 245-252.

⁴Recruits were not taught horsemanship and weapons. They learned these subjects under the tutelage of the non-commissioned officers of the company to which they were assigned after they left the depot. Randy Steffen, *The Horse Soldier, 1776-1943, Volume II, The Frontier, The Mexican War, The Civil War, The Indian Wars, 1851-1880*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 34; S. E. Whitman, *The Troopers*. (New York: Hastings House Pubs., 1962), 82-84.

⁵Returns From Regular Army Cavalry Regiments, 1833-1916, (2nd Dragoons, January 1856-July 1861,) National Archives, Microfilm, M-744, Roll 17.

⁶Gen. Samuel W. Ferguson. "With Albert Sidney Johnston's Expedition to Utah, 1857," *Kansas Historical Collections*, 12 (1911-1912), 305.

As spring approached, the livestock and the dragoons gradually moved closer to Fort Bridger. They arrived near the fort in May, and the march into Utah was undertaken in June. Mediators resolved the difficulties with the Mormons, so the march into Utah was unopposed. General Johnston settled on the location for the troop encampment in the north end of Cedar Valley, on the west side of Lake Utah, and about 36 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. Immediately the troops undertook construction of the new post, named Camp Floyd, after John B. Floyd, Secretary of War. The missions now became twofold, one of supporting the newly-installed civil government, the other, protecting the trails west through Utah from Indian depredations.

In August 1858, Robert Foote was permanently detailed company tailor.⁸ This relieved him of all other company duties. At all times when Company "F" was in garrison, he was detailed to this duty, however, when the company took to the field, he assumed his regular duties as a dragoon. In early 1859, Company "F" was assigned to the garrison at Fort Bridger, as the troops at Camp Floyd returned to the pre-expedition policy of assigning various companies, usually singly or in pairs, to separate garrisons. Some of the dragoon companies were assigned to posts as far away as Nevada and California. On July 6, 1859, Company "F" moved again, this time it was assigned to duty as the mounted unit at Fort Laramie. In September, it was joined by Company "D", 2nd Dragoons, and Companies "A," "D," and "I" of the 2nd U.S. Infantry.⁹ The Fort Laramie garrison patrolled the California-Oregon trail east and west from the post; making scouting expeditions along the Laramie and Platte Rivers, and scouting the area north to the Cheyenne River.

Foote continued his duty as company tailor. By getting in a little extra time each day working on his own, he accumulated money well in excess of his private's pay. Sometime during this period he began trading fresh livestock, particularly horses, to the emigrants for their broken-down ones.¹⁰ The usual pattern for this commerce was in the case of a trade, two or three broken-down animals were exchanged for each fresh one. Alternatively, the deal could be all or partly in cash. Foote hired Bob Smoke, a half-Sioux, one of the so-called "Coffee Coolers" Indians who lived around the post, to herd his livestock just outside the post boundaries. In this way, he managed to accumulate a large and valuable herd.

During this time Foote's career took on a mystery. On Feb. 13, 1861, Sgt. William Wright, also of Company "F," but on a detail with Company "C", 2nd Dragoons at Fort Leavenworth, wrote a letter to Seth Ward,

post trader at Fort Laramie, instructing him to deliver a \$1,000 treasury note to Foote that Wright left with him. Foote signed for the note on February 25.¹¹ At this time, the monthly pay of a mounted sergeant was \$17, while that of a mounted private was \$13.¹² A \$1,000 treasury note was a huge sum of money for a sergeant to own, and even more so to be paying to a private. It raises speculation about Foote's activities, and the nature of the business dealings between a noncommissioned officer and a private under his command.

On Aug. 10, 1861, General Order Number 55, Adjutant General's Office, abolished the two dragoon regiments and the regiment of mounted rifles. The 2nd Dragoons, as the second oldest mounted unit, became the 2nd Cavalry.¹³ The regiment was ordered to Washington, D.C. to protect the capital, and Company "F" departed Fort Laramie Nov. 11, 1861, and arrived in Washington on Foote's birthday, Feb. 2, 1862. On February 24, the fifth anniversary of his enlistment, Foote was

⁸Cooke and his dragoons, together with the expedition's herders, were directed to take all of the remaining beef cattle, oxen, mules and horses, except for those absolutely required for the camp's use, twenty miles south to Henry's Fork. Altogether, they had between six and seven thousand head of stock to graze and guard. The camp moved frequently searching for sufficient forage for the animals. This was made even more difficult by the cold and the drifting snow. Also, close guard had to be kept on the herds to prevent the stock from straying or from being stolen by Mormon guerrillas who often harassed the troops by sniping at them, or at the livestock. The snow was too deep for drill or parade; there was little reading material; they were practically cut off from all mail and communications with the outside for four months; and, they were on quarter rations since Lot Smith's guerrillas destroyed three of the expedition's supply trains. Hunting sage hens and jackrabbits not only provided entertainment, but was a prime source of necessary food as well. The other entertainments seemed to be drinking and poker. Cooke quarreled with Brig. Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, the expedition commander. In a series of acrimonious dispatches, Cooke complained about the difficulties of his troops, and what he perceived as lack of support. In the spring, Johnston sent him a small augmentation of infantry, and essentially told Cooke not to register any more complaints. Ferguson, 307-310; "March of the 2nd Dragoons, Report of Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke on the March of the 2nd Dragoons from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas to Fort Bridger in 1857," *Annals of Wyoming*, 27 (April, 1955), 55-60; Otis E. Young, *The West of Philip St. George Cooke* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1955), 302-306.

⁹Returns From Regular Army Cavalry Regiments, 1833-1916 (2nd Dragoons, January, 1856-July, 1861), National Archives, Microfilm, M-744, Roll 17.

¹⁰Returns From Regular Army Cavalry Regiments

¹¹Ellis, 50.

¹²Sergeant William Wright, 2nd Dragoons, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to S. E. Ward & Company, Fort Laramie, Feb. 13, 1861, Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources.

¹³Revised Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1861 (Philadelphia: J. G. L. Brown, Printer, 1861), 351.

¹⁴Steffen, 67.

discharged. In spite of the pending crisis, he did not choose to reenlist, nor was he required to stay in service.¹⁴

Apparently he returned to Fort Laramie as quickly as possible, and as a private citizen, resumed his various business activities, particularly tailoring and stock-trading. He had an excellent reputation for tailoring officers' uniforms. Bob Smoke, his half-Sioux herder, continued pasturing the livestock outside the boundaries of the post. It is not clear where Foote lived, but there was a large community of whites, Indians and half-breeds living around the post. It is probable that he bought, or built a cabin in the area of the rest of the community. In spite of the war, traffic on the California-Oregon trail remained heavy, and with it, the demand for fresh horses, mules and oxen. The influx of volunteer regiments, replacing the departed regular regiments, also increased the demand for Foote's services as a tailor.

In the spring of 1864, an increasing number of young Sioux warriors quietly intermingled with the "Coffee Coolers." One evening in mid-May, Bob Smoke did not bring Foote's horses in from pasture. The next morning, it was evident that Bob Smoke, the horses, the Sioux warriors, and some of the permanent Indian residents, had all disappeared. Their tracks, which they made no effort to hide, indicated that they crossed the Platte River and traveled north toward the Cheyenne River. It was two days before Foote could get organized, and get permission to go after them. John Hunter and Tom Maxwell, two civilian friends living near Fort Laramie, agreed to go with him. Lt. Col. William O. Collins, 11th Volunteer Ohio Cavalry, the Fort Laramie commander, sent Sgt. Herman Haas and a cavalry squad with him. Haas was ordered not to go beyond the Cheyenne River valley. The Indians with the horses left a clear trail for the pursuers to follow. When they reached the Cheyenne River, Sergeant Haas suggested that the three civilians turn back with him, but Foote was adamant. Haas and his troops reluctantly returned to Fort Laramie, and Hunter, Maxwell and Foote continued the pursuit alone.

Two and a half days later, they came upon the Indian camp. Bob Smoke came to meet them, claiming the Sioux had taken him and the horses. John Hunter, who lived with the Sioux and had a Sioux wife, spoke Sioux fluently. He also knew many of the Indians who had taken the horses. He thought that Bob Smoke might have let the Indians believe the horses were his. Hunter was highly respected by the Sioux, who thought he was invulnerable. The three were banking on this. They were finally invited into the camp. Hunter suggested it might be an ambush, and they should be prepared to ride through the camp. It was an ambush, and Foote and Tom

Maxwell each was struck by two arrows, while John Hunter came through without a scratch, even though the one Indian with a rifle shot directly at him.

They found refuge in a patch of willows under a clay bank. They stopped, built a small fortification of logs, dressed their wounds and ate. They still had their pack horse, so they did have food, water and ammunition. Hunter was sure the Indians would attack again just before sundown, after they had time to scout around and make sure the three were alone, and there were no soldiers with them. As Hunter predicted, the Indians renewed their attack at dusk. Their arrows couldn't penetrate the willows with any accuracy, and the fire of the three held the Indians back. Hunter jumped on a log to get a better shot, and the Indian with the rifle, who missed him before, shot, and this time killed him. Hunter did manage to stay standing on the log long enough to empty both of his revolvers, stepped off, and fell dead. With his reputation of invulnerability, the Indians evidently thought the shot had missed him, and they faded away. Foote and Maxwell loaded Hunter's body on his horse, took him out on the prairie where they buried him, then removed every evidence of a grave.

Slowly and painfully they made their way back to Fort Laramie. Their wounds were serious and they stayed in the hospital some six weeks. A few days after they were released from the hospital, Foote was lying on the cot in his cabin. Bob Smoke came in, pounded his chest, and proclaimed loudly that he was a good Indian. Foote had his revolver on the bed beside him. He raised up, shot Smoke, and said "Now, you're a good Indian."¹⁵

According to Lewis B. Hull, who was a member of the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, Bob Smoke did not die immediately, but was taken to the post hospital where he died. Foote had shot him in the stomach and the ball lodged against his back ribs. On June 13, there was a skirmish about five miles north of Fort Laramie. The Indians evidently came back to kill Foote, since White Eyes, Smoke's half-brother, swore he would get revenge. A cavalry patrol shot two of the Indians, killing one.¹⁶

Colonel Collins confined Foote to the guardhouse, ostensibly for shooting Bob Smoke, but probably as much for his own protection from the Indians who were after him. According to Foote, he remained in the guardhouse until Colonel Thomas Moonlight arrived at Fort Laramie, and ordered Foote's release.¹⁷ This seems un-

¹⁴National Archives, *Returns From Regular Cavalry Regiments, 1833-1916*.

¹⁵Ellis, 51-55.

¹⁶Lewis Byram Hull (Myra E. Hull, Editor), "Soldiering on the High Plains. The Diary of Lewis Byram Hull, 1864-1866." *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, 7 (February, 1938), 13-14.

¹⁷Ellis, 55.

likely, since Moonlight was assigned to Fort Laramie as Commander, North Sub-District, District of the Plains, in April 1865.¹⁸ This would have meant some ten months of confinement without a trial for Foote. He also states that Moonlight offered him the position of post trader at Fort Halleck, in compensation for his loss. Since he did move to Fort Halleck in that capacity in the spring of 1865, it is probable the Colonel Moonlight did make those arrangements. Moonlight, like Foote, was born in Forfarshire, Scotland, and he was just a little over a year older than Foote. Also like Foote, he had started his life in the United States by enlisting in the regular army shortly after his arrival.¹⁹ It is possible they found they had a great deal in common.²⁰

John Loree, the Indian agent at Fort Laramie, suggested that White Eyes, Smoke's brother, be given some gifts and that Foote and Hunter be banished from Indian territory to restore the peace, save the two men's lives, and pacify the Indians.²¹ Evidently he did not know John Hunter had not survived the attack. The relations between Hunter and Loree, and probably Foote, were less than friendly. Shortly after Brig. Gen. Robert B. Mitchell assumed command of the Department of Nebraska in early March 1864, he had an interview with John Hunter of whom he said, "I think him honest and intelligent. Citizens here who know him say that he is reliable." Hunter told Mitchell that the unrest among all the tribes in the region could be traced directly to Agent Robert Loree. In his report, General Mitchell said he had conversations with two other persons who made the same statements regarding Loree.²²

Loree canceled the licenses of all regular Indian traders, and licensed friends and relatives; he took a major share of the Indian annuity goods from each shipment, sold them to the traders, who in turn, traded them to the Indians. With the monopoly he established, the price the Indians received for their hides was much lower than it had been under the old, established traders; their annuities were reduced by Loree's thievery; and the quality and variety of the trade goods, other than their annuity goods, were much lower. Loree did not stay around to see whether or not his solution for Foote was put into effect. Hunters' statements to General Mitchell were proving true. Fearing for his life in the face of rising Sioux anger, Loree submitted his resignation from Missouri on September 30, 1864, where he fled with a wagon and team belonging to the Indian Bureau.²³ Since Loree left Fort Laramie in disgrace before Foote went to Fort Halleck, in all probability his suggestion played little or

no part in Foote's removal from Fort Laramie.

Foote expanded his activities at Fort Halleck. He was awarded the contract to freight supplies from Fort Laramie to Fort Halleck. He used wagon trains of double wagons with ten or twelve yoke of oxen to each pair of wagons, and usually drove one outfit himself. He also started a ranch and trading post where the Overland Trail crossed Foote Creek. In his diary entry for July 13, Hull notes that information came that Foote's ranch was burned, and all of his stock stolen.²⁴

Foote received an arrow wound in the leg, and as his store burned, he retreated back to Fort Halleck. On his way, he discovered an emigrant wagon train also under attack. The emigrants wanted to make a run for the fort. He convinced the wagon master that it was safer to circle

the wagons, and organized a defense. The defense was strong, and the attack was short. However, two wagons did not make it. The wagons belonged to the Fletcher family. Lagging behind the train, they were cut off. The

father, Jasper, was wounded, but he and three sons escaped. Mrs. Fletcher was killed and scalped and two daughters, 13-year-old Mary, and two-year-old Lizzie, were carried off. But for Foote's bravery and quick-thinking, the entire train could well have met the same fate.²⁵

On Sept. 10, 1865, Foote and Frank Daley were bringing a double wagon rig loaded with flour from Fort Laramie to Fort Halleck when they were attacked by Indians. Initially, they tried to take refuge behind the wagons. The Indians, armed with rifles, immediately killed the oxen, and kept the men pinned down. A sack

¹⁸ *The War of the Rebellion. A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Series I, V, XI.VIII, Part II.* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896,) 275.

¹⁹ Dan L. Thrapp, *Encyclopedia of Western Biography, V H* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1918), 1008-1009.

²⁰ Letter, Brig. Gen. P. E. Connor, Fort Laramie, to Major Gen. G. M. Dodge, Commander, Department of the Missouri, July 6, 1865. *The War of the Rebellion.* 1059. Colonel Moonlight's opportunity to do anything for Foote was very short. He crossed General P. E. Connor, Commander, District of the Plains, who, on July 6, 1865, suspended him from command and ordered him to Fort Kearny to be mustered out of service.

²¹ Daniel L. Kinnaman, *A Little Piece of Wyoming* (Rawlins: Kinnaman Publications, 1997), 67-68.

²² Letter Brig. Gen. Robert Mitchell to Capt. John Williams, Asst. Adjutant General, Department of Kansas, March 24 1864. *The War of the Rebellion.* Series I, V, XI.VIII, Part II, p. 275.

²³ Remi Nadeau, *Fort Laramie and the Sioux* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 161-167.

²⁴ Hull, 42.

²⁵ Elias. W. Whitcomb, "Reminiscences of a Pioneer, 1857-1869," *Wyoming Historical Collections* (1920), 93.

He also started a ranch and trading post where the Overland Trail crossed Foote Creek.

at a time, they removed enough flour to fortify themselves under the wagon, where they spent the night. In the middle of the affray, Foote took a bullet in the shoulder. When they were late arriving at Fort Halleck, a cavalry patrol went in search of them, frightening off their assailants. Foote's wound was dressed at the fort. While he was recuperating at home, an Indian whom he knew slightly asked to see him, saying he had an antelope quarter he wished to give to him. When the Indian was admitted to Foote's room, he drew a pistol with the evident intent of killing Foote. As usual, Foote had his pistol under his pillow, outdrew the Indian and killed him.²⁶

Despite the Indian attacks on the Overland trail, the traffic was heavy. The army posts along the trails were charged with keeping a count of the emigrants passing the post. In most cases, this was an extra duty of the post surgeon. In 1864, the tally of Dr. J. W. Finfrock, post surgeon at Fort Halleck, showed 4,264 wagons and 17,584 emigrants passing the fort during the travel season.²⁷ Traders such as Elias W. Whitcomb and Foote were in a position to make a good profit from the traffic.

General Order No. 33, dated March 10, 1866, Headquarters, Department of the Missouri, ordered the abandonment of Forts Halleck and Collins, to be replaced by a new post at the Big Laramie River crossing, to be named Fort John Buford. Foote chose to stay at the Fort Halleck location. The business with the emigrant trains traveling the Overland Trail remained good. In addition, he was postmaster as well as justice of the peace. The Coad brothers were doing extensive logging on Elk Mountain, providing ties, fire wood, and bridge timbers for the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad. Foote had the contracts to supply the logging camps, and also had contracts to run the wagon trains used by Mark Coad to haul the logs to the railroad right of way. He had staked out claims on Foote Creek, and was raising livestock as well as cutting hay for his own livestock, Wells, Fargo & Company's overland stage line, Coad brothers, and the emigrants. He also had contracts to rebuild Pine Grove and Bridger Pass stage stations for the Overland Stage Company after they were destroyed in Indian attacks. He evidently felt that these multiple enterprises, for the time being at least, would offset the loss of the army business, and that he was better off where he was.

The Dakota territorial legislature organized the territory's western region as Laramie County, with the county seat at Fort Sanders on Jan. 9, 1867. The county commissioners were William L. Kuykendall, J. N. Hinman and William Hopkins. Robert Foote was appointed county sheriff. Kuykendall tried to get the other two commissioners to meet to organize the county, but they failed to act, so at that time, the county was never

actually organized. For that reason, Foote actually never served as sheriff.²⁸

Although never a sheriff, Foote did make one arrest, of L. H. Musgrove one of the most daring of all western outlaws. Foote knew him when Musgrove was an Indian trader at Fort Halleck. One day a half-Arapaho jokingly called Musgrove a liar. Musgrove's answer was to put a bullet in the man's brain. This effectively ended Musgrove's career as an Indian trader. He turned to horse-stealing, and when working alone was not as lucrative as he had hoped, he organized a syndicate with agents in Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Dakota and Montana.²⁹ Musgrove's syndicate was too big to be successful for very long. He had been headquartered in Denver, but as things began to fall apart, he returned north and hid out in the vicinity of Elk Mountain. One day he came down to the railroad at Percy station. He was sitting in a restaurant eating breakfast when Foote, who had just delivered a wagon train of railroad ties, decided he would have breakfast. Musgrove had his back to the door, but Foote recognized him. He quietly drew his pistol, stepped up to Musgrove and told him to put up his hands. He took Musgrove to Fort Steele, where the army blacksmith put him in irons. A few days later, en route to Denver, Musgrove escaped. He was recaptured shortly after by the U.S. Marshal from Cheyenne, H. D. Haskell, and returned to Denver.³⁰ He was taken from jail by a mob and lynched on November 23, 1868.³¹

²⁶Ellis, 56, 57.

²⁷ General G. M. Dodge, commander of U.S. Forces in Kansas and the Territories, in his report of Nov. 1, 1865 to the Commander, Department of the Missouri, called it the best natural road from the Missouri to the Pacific, and noted that the traffic between 1 March and 10 August was 11,854 persons. Letter, General G. M. Dodge to Brevet Lt. Colonel Joseph McC. Bell, Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Missouri, War Department, *War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, Volume XLVIII, Part 1; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902.) p. 342.

²⁸Judge W. L. Kuykendall, *Frontier Days*. (J. M. and H. L. Kuykendall, Publishers, 1917), 101.

²⁹There are estimates that his gang at one time numbered 200 men. They would steal horses and mules in the border states and run them north, particularly along the route of Union Pacific construction. With doctored brands and forged bills of sale, they marketed them to the railroad, contractors, and other potential buyers. They then reversed the process, stealing livestock in the north, doctoring the brands, forging bills of sale, and peddling them in the south. They robbed stages, wagon trains, emigrant trains, anything that offered possible loot, including army livestock and funds. General D. J. Cook, *Hands Up; or, Twenty years of Detective Life in the Mountains and Plains*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 39-60; William Ross Collier and Edwin Victor Westrate, *Dave Cook of the Rockies*. (New York: Rufus Rockwell Wilson, 1936), 80-96.

³⁰Collier and Westrate, 95.

For Foote, 1868 proved to be an eventful year. In the fall of 1862, shortly after the establishment of Fort Halleck, a young lady, Amanda Norris, came West from Fort Leavenworth. She was the half-sister of John Sublette, a frontiersman who lived near Fort Halleck. Sublette and Foote occasionally were business partners. Amanda was one of the few women at the fort. She worked at various jobs on the post, including clerking in Foote's store. On April 10, 1868, Amanda and Foote were married at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.³²

With the increased demand for hay, Foote expanded his production with one of the first irrigation projects in the territory. With a team and plow, and a lot of hand work, he dug ditches on the upper reaches of Foote Creek, bringing the water down to irrigate the creek bottoms.³³ He was operating under squatters' rights, without title to the land and without legal water rights.

While Foote was engaged in his other enterprises, Amanda managed the store. She also helped with the hay operations, including the irrigation, cutting and stacking. In the next few years, the Footes became parents of five boys. Amanda received an inheritance from her father which she invested in property in Omaha. When the boys were of school age, she took them to the city for the school term. While in Omaha, three of the five



William Bevins. He and Herman Lessman, attacked Foote at Fort Halleck.

children died. Only Robert Jr., and Byron survived to adulthood.³⁴

On August 13, 1876, Foote again tangled with a pair of outlaws. About dusk, he noticed two men camping in the willows along a stream a short distance from his house. When he approached the camp, he recognized one of the men as Bill Bevins. Some time before, Bevins held Foote up and robbed him of a sum of money. In the ensuing shooting, neither Bevins nor Foote was hit, but a bullet lodged in the Foote's family Bible. This time, Bevins attacked Foote immediately, knocked the gun out of his hand, forced him down, and choked him.

Amanda was watching from the window. She grabbed a stick, jumped out of the window, and attacked Bevins. He took the stick from her, and grabbed her by the ankle. She screamed for help, and Mrs. Hansen, a woman who lived nearby, brought her a pistol. Bevins let them both go, and ran into the willows. Amanda shot at him, but missed. Bevins and his partner, Herman Lessman, left the area.

Foote offered the Lee brothers, two trappers who lived nearby, \$200 if they captured the two and brought them back. In a few days they returned with Bevins and Lessman tied on a horse. Foote paid them; took Bevins and Lessman to Rawlins, the Carbon County seat, and turned them over to Sheriff D. F. Rennie. A grand jury returned a true bill on both. Lessman was tried on September 24, 1876, and found guilty of assault with intent to kill, and sentenced to term of two years, six months in the territorial penitentiary.³⁵ Bevins won a change of venue to Albany County. On February 7, 1877, he was tried and found guilty on charges of assault and attempt to murder.³⁶ On February 14, he was sentenced to a term of eight years in the territorial penitentiary.³⁷

³¹Herbert Howe Bancroft, *Popular Tribunals*, V. I. (San Francisco: The History Publishing Co., 1887), 670.

³²According to the United States Census for 1870, Amanda was listed as age 26 and mulatto; Foote was listed as age 32, a carpenter, and having a personal estate of \$10,000. Their son, Jesse, was listed as age 1, and mulatto.

³³Robert Homer Burns, Andrew Springs Gillespie, and Willing Gay Richardson, *Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches* (Laramie: Top-of-the-World Press, 1955), 638.

³⁴Mrs. Alfred M. (Cora) Beach, *Women of Wyoming*, II. (Casper: S. E. Boyer and Co., 1904), 2, 3.

³⁵Carbon County [Wyoming Territory] District Court, Criminal Indictment No. 261, *People of the Territory of Wyoming v. W. Bevens and H. Lessman*, filed September 26, 1876.

³⁶*Ibid*

³⁷Bevins escaped from the Albany County Jail on April 3, 1877, while awaiting appeal of his conviction. He became one of the most notorious "road agents" on the Cheyenne-Deadwood stage route. He was finally recaptured near Lander on July 6, 1877. He served five years and seven months. Elvira L. Frye, *Atlas of Wyoming Outlaws at the Territorial Penitentiary* (Laramie: Jelm Mountain Publications, 1990), 43-44.

By 1881 traffic on the Overland Trail had deceased to a trickle: logging on Elk Mountain had declined; and, the post office at Fort Halleck was moved to the new town of Elk Mountain. Since Foote's store and hay businesses were declining, he decided to look for a new location.

Johnson County had recently been organized in the north-central part of the territory, and the town of Buffalo, its county seat, was growing rapidly. It was headquarters for many of the large new cattle companies forming out of what until recently had been Indian territory. The ranches needed a ready source of supplies and services and the convenience of the county seat. The nearby military post, Fort McKinney also afforded the townspeople with the additional opportunity for contracts for supplies and services to fulfill its needs. The opportunities in Buffalo were just the thing to sharpen Foote's entrepreneurial appetite. He sold his holdings in the Elk Mountain area and took a short trip to Scotland to visit his family. On his return, he went to Denver, and at the "Red Barn," he hired John Barkey to help move his livestock, dry goods and personal belongings from Fort Halleck to Buffalo.³⁸

In the center of downtown Buffalo, Foote built a large, two-story log, general store building with the usual false front. Rows of dormer windows on both sides made the store light and pleasant. On the south-side of the building was a wide, covered veranda with benches and chairs which proved to be a popular gathering place for the residents. The store hours were 6 a.m., to 8 p.m. Through his skill as a tailor, the former dragoon and former frontiersman transformed himself into a gentleman. In Buffalo, he always wore a Prince Albert coat, striped trousers, a brocade vest and top hat and carried a walking stick. He also tailored Mrs. Foote's and the boys' clothes.³⁹

Foote found living in Buffalo to be both exciting and lucrative. In addition to the store, he started a small livestock operation and contracted with the army for supplies for Fort McKinney. He became active in Johnson County Democratic politics, and played a leading role in the party. There was, however, a deep rift which underlay both the social and economic structures of Johnson County.

When the Sioux War of 1876-1877 drew to a close, the Powder River basin, the prized land of the Sioux and Cheyennes, was opened for white exploitation. The excellent cattle ranges of the basin and vicinity created an immediate land rush, a rush to establish claims to the best range land and the limited water resources of the region. In addition to the large, well-financed cattle com-

panies, mostly absentee-ownership corporations, there were many smaller ranches, one or two-man concerns, operating on a shoestring on the fringes of the larger outfits. They competed for the same rangelands and water. There were also bands of rustlers who victimized both. The larger companies were the rustlers' preferred targets. They had the largest herds spread over the widest territory, making them the easiest prey. The small ranchers often found that it was to their advantage to cooperate with, if not join, the rustlers.

The owners and managers of the large companies lumped the small ranchers and the rustlers into a single category, and a "we and they" attitude developed. By the time Foote established his store in Buffalo, and his nearby ranch, the lines were clearly drawn. The Wyoming Stock Growers Association, with its limited, select membership, had control of the roundup and marketing system. It also had a private detective force to execute its rules and protect the interests of its members. The association's membership also included most of the politically and financially powerful men in the territory. The smaller ranchers found it difficult to hold on to their land and water rights, to have their brands recognized, to participate in the range-wide roundups. The roundups were conducted under the auspices, initially of the Association, and later of the Territorial then the State Livestock Commission. Both of the latter were under the control of the association. When the smaller ranchers did ship cattle to market, the shipments often were confiscated by the brand inspectors at the receiving stockyard as illegally branded or improperly documented. They were then auctioned off, and the proceeds sent to the Association, until January 1890, when they were deposited in the general funds of the Territory.⁴⁰

Initially, most of the townspeople in Buffalo tried to stay neutral. They did business with both the large outfits and the small ones, and could not afford to antagonize either. Others felt that the issues were not vital enough to become involved. Pressures increased, however, for them to declare their support for one side or the other.⁴¹

³⁸Charles Gray Miller. *Buffalo Bulletin*, November 16, 1916, 1.

³⁹Buffalo Centennial Committee. *Buffalo's First Century*. (Buffalo: Buffalo Bulletin, 1984), 4, 5.

⁴⁰Oscar H. "Jack" Flagg. *The Cattle Business in Johnson County*. (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969), 40, 41.

⁴¹T. P. Hill, an attorney in Buffalo, was one of the few who managed to stay neutral. When a delegation called on him to express his loyalty one way or the other, Charles T. Hogerson, president of the First National Bank, told the delegation that any man who preferred to stay neutral should be allowed that privilege. Hill was not disturbed again. Burton S. Hill, "Frontier Lawyer, T. P. Hill," *Annals of Wyoming*, 34 (April, 1962), 49.

Foote could not remain neutral. With his son, Robert Jr., he was a small ranch operator, just as he had been for much of his life in Wyoming. Many of his customers were small ranchers and their families. The managers of the large companies accused him of stocking his range with mavericks, stolen calves, or calves with altered brands, rustled from their ranges and taken by him in payment for goods from his store.⁴²

In 1891, Foote had another problem. He was also indicted by a federal grand jury in Cheyenne on nine counts of defrauding the government on grain sales to Fort McKinney.⁴³ The case was postponed from court term to court term. Foote's attorney asked for continuances, and the government's witnesses, mostly army officers, were now scattered throughout the country, and were difficult to subpoena. Also, the U.S. Marshal's budget did not have sufficient funds to pay the necessary witness fees. Trial was finally held in May 1894. A *nolle prosequi* was filed on the first count by Benjamin Fowler, United States District Attorney, and in a jury trial, Foote was found innocent on the other eight counts.⁴⁴

In the meantime, the tensions in Johnson County increased. The Wyoming Stock Growers Association had fallen on hard times, and they were no longer able to employ the stock inspectors and detectives who had previously safeguarded their interests. Frank Canton, who had served two terms as Johnson County sheriff, 1882-1886, was defeated for a third term. In January 1887, the stock growers' association appointed him to head its detective force in the northern part of Wyoming with headquarters in Buffalo.⁴⁵ In this position, he held warrants as a deputy sheriff in every northern county as well as a commission as Deputy United States Marshal. As sheriff, Canton supported the position of the big cattle interests, and as their chief of detectives in the north, he came down hard on small ranchers and rustlers alike. By the end of 1888, the Association was no longer able to pay its bills, and the Cheyenne banks had cut off all credit. Since the association could no longer afford to keep him on their rolls, Canton again considered running for sheriff.⁴⁶

In the summer of 1891, death came to a number of accused or suspected rustlers. On June 4, three men went to Thomas Waggoner's house near Newcastle, ostensibly, to arrest him. Fifteen days later his body was found hanging from a tree two miles from his house. Waggoner was suspected of horse stealing, and at least one of the three men who came for him was a Wyoming Stock Growers' Association detective.⁴⁷

On October 7, 1891, Foote had his own problem with the system. He made a shipment of cattle to the Omaha stockyards. Claude L. Talbot, stock inspector for the

Wyoming Board of Livestock Commissioners, seized three head of cattle from the shipment as estrays, sold them, and, as prescribed by law, sent the proceeds to the secretary of the state board. The state board refused to recognize Foote as the legal owner of the cattle.⁴⁸ There is little doubt that Talbot was a "company man."⁴⁹

The brand on the cattle was Foote's own, FOOT, on the left ribs.⁵⁰ The cattle originally carried the "hat" brand when he purchased seven head from L.A. Webb in November 1890, and were rebranded by Webb with Foote's brand at the time of the sale. The "hat" brand was considered by the cattlemen to be an outlaw brand, even though it was legally registered.⁵¹

Foote filed a request for reimbursement, with the documentation proving ownership required by law, to the secretary of the State Livestock Commission on October 31. Payment was refused, and he filed a petition for man-

⁴²Frank Canton, *Frontier Trails* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 82, 83.

⁴³ *United States vs Robert Foote, et al.*, Case No. 120, District of Wyoming, June 14, 1891. Records, U. S. District Court for the District of Wyoming, National Archives, Denver Branch.

⁴⁴Benjamin F. Fowler, U.S. Attorney for Wyoming, to the Attorney General of the United States, November 26, 1893, R.G. 60, National Archives.

⁴⁵ Frank Canton to the Wyoming Stock Growers' Association, January 22, 1887, Wyoming Stock Growers' Association collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

⁴⁶In a letter to Thomas B. Adams, Secretary of the Association, he stated, with some bitterness, "In regard to my chances for reelection to the office of sheriff --I will say that at present I don't think I stand any show whatsoever--so far the rustlers have run everything. Jack Flagg and three of his gang will be here as delegates from Powder River." Frank Canton to Thomas B. Adams, October 8, 1888, Wyoming Stock Growers' Association collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

⁴⁷Helena Huntington Smith, *The War on Powder River* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 148, 149.

⁴⁸ *State ex rel. Foote v. Board of Livestock Commissioners*, 4 Wyoming Reports, 127. It was designated Wyoming State Supreme Court Case #2-131.

⁴⁹Inspector Talbot was a part of the Wyoming Stock Growers power structure. He was a signer of the original petition to organize Johnson County in 1880, and at the time, worked for Moreton Frewen and the 76 ranch. Talbot was employed as stock inspector by the Wyoming Stock Growers Association from 1885 until 1890, then by the Wyoming State Livestock Board from 1890 to 1892, while it had the inspection responsibility. In 1893, when the Wyoming Stock Growers Association again assumed the stock inspection responsibilities, Talbot returned to its employment, and at his retirement, had been an inspector for the Association for 46 years. John Rolfe Burroughs, *Guardian of the Grasslands* (Cheyenne: Wyoming Stock Growers Association, 1971), 69.

⁵⁰ State Board of Livestock Commissioners of Wyoming, *Wyoming Brand Book*, 1919 (Cheyenne: State Board of Livestock Commissioners of Wyoming, 1919), 85.

⁵¹ Charles H. Burritt to S. M. Allen (Denver, Colorado), May 10, 1892, Burritt Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

damus with the Wyoming State Supreme Court on Dec. 29, 1892. In December 1893, the court returned a unanimous decision that the manner in which the law was written gave the Livestock Commission full authority to determine ownership of cattle, and to determine the nature of the evidence required to prove it; therefore, no writ of mandamus could be issued.⁵²

As relations between the small operators and the association worsened, a group of Cheyenne-based association members put together an "invasion" force, intended to "eliminate" rustlers in Johnson County. The story includes hiring of Texas gunmen, moving men and equipment under cover of silence north into Johnson County, and the killing of Nate Champion and Nick Ray at the KC Ranch cabin.⁵³

At the same time the Invaders were moving north, Robert Foote, Jack Flagg, John R. Smith, Thad Cole and D. C. Brown were preparing to go to Douglas for the State Democratic Convention.⁵⁴ The plan was for Flagg and his 17-year-old stepson, Alonzo, to spend the night at the KC with Ray and Champion. Foote, Cole and Brown were going straight to Smith's ranch, where they would spend the night. Flagg was to meet them at Smith's the next morning, then all five delegates would ride together to Douglas.⁵⁵

Flagg's stepson was going to Powder River Crossing. He had a team and the running gear of a wagon, while Flagg was on horseback. They reached the KC ranch about 2:30 p.m., when the Invaders' siege of Champion and Ray was well underway. At the moment, neither party was firing, so there was nothing to warn nor alarm Flagg and Alonzo. Flagg did see a few men around the barn, but did not consider it unusual. When Alonzo came abreast of the house, he was ordered to halt. Instead, he whipped the team to a gallop. The Invaders immediately opened fire. The firing scared the horses and by the time Alonzo had them under control, he was well past the house and out of sight of the gunmen.

In the meantime, Flagg's horse was recognized, and he became the target. Charlie Ford, foreman of the TA ranch, took deliberate aim with his Winchester, and fired at Flagg but missed. Flagg was unarmed, so he slid over on the side of his horse, and made a run for it. When he caught up with Alonzo, he took his rifle from the wagon, told Alonzo to cut loose the horses, take the fastest one, and make a run for it. By the time the Invaders could mount a pursuit, both were well out of danger.

When Flagg reached Smith's ranch, the rest of the delegation already was there. Flagg, Alonzo, and three of the others started back to the KC ranch to see if they could raise the siege on Champion and Ray. At the Carr ranch they met a posse of twelve men from Buffalo on

the same mission. Terrance Smith, whose ranch was close to the KC, heard the firing suspected what was occurring, and rode into Buffalo to report it. Sheriff Angus called on Captain Menardi of Company "C," of the Wyoming National Guard for men and arms. In compliance with General Order No. 4, sent by Gov. Amos Barber earlier in the month, Menardi refused. Angus then set out for the KC with a posse. They arrived to find the smoldering ruins of the house, Champion's body in a gully a short distance from the house, and the burned torso of Ray's body in the house. The posse immediately started back to Buffalo. They made the round-trip ride of 120 miles in fourteen hours.⁵⁶

Foote rode from John R. Smith's ranch back to Buffalo to alert the town. Terrance Smith's report already had the town in an uproar. The citizens were unsure of the Invader's identity or their intentions. Although they were already warned, the Buffalo residents had the treat of seeing their usually staid, well-tailored merchant revert to his days as a dragoon and Indian fighter. He roared down the street on his well-known black stallion, no hat, hair, beard and coattails flying, yelling, "Come out you _____ and take sides." He then opened his store and provided arms, ammunition, clothing, food and anything else he had in stock to any of the posse volunteers who needed it.⁵⁷ It is estimated that to equip the posse, Robert Foote gave away between \$15,000 and \$20,000 in merchandise, little of which was ever returned to him or paid for.

The hunters now became the hunted. While they proceeded slowly toward Buffalo, a messenger rode out to meet them to warn them that Buffalo was in an uproar; their motives and goals were "misunderstood"; that fami-

⁵² The decision in the case is reported at 4 *Wyoming Reports*, 126.

⁵³ Numerous authors have written on the Johnson County Invasion. For a view extremely sympathetic to the Johnson County residents, see the classic, Asa S. Mercer, *The Banditti of the Plains: The Crowning Infamy of the Ages*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954). Less one-sided, but still sympathetic to Johnson County is Helena Huntington Smith, *War on Powder River*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965). For an account more sympathetic to the Invaders, see Robert B. David, *Malcolm Campbell, Sheriff*. (Casper: Wyomingana, 1932).

⁵⁴ *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, April 13, 1892.

⁵⁵ O. H. "Jack" Flagg, was an outstanding cowboy who came to Wyoming with a herd of Texas cattle in 1882. He was sought after immediately by many of the large livestock companies. When he filed on some land, bought some cattle and registered a brand, he was entered in the stockgrowers' black list. He became a leader and a voice for the small ranchers, and in 1892, he purchased the *Buffalo Echo* and became a major spokesman for the small ranchers and the Democratic Party. He and Robert Foote were friends as well as political allies.

⁵⁶ Smith, 214.

⁵⁷ Smith: A. S. Mercer, 83, 84.

lies from outlying areas of the county were crowding into town; and, previously neutral townspeople were taking up arms. The Invaders turned back to the TA ranch, about 14 miles from Buffalo. Dissension broke out again with Canton, Hesse, and Smith, the leader of the Texas mercenaries, favoring continuing on to Buffalo and doing battle, even though the element of surprise was lost, and the odds were shifting. Walcott and the "Cheyenne Club" contingent were in favor of fortifying the TA and going on the defensive. Again, they prevailed.

The people of Buffalo soon located the Invaders. Jack Flagg, and about 50 men formed a series of pickets around the TA buildings about midnight, April 10. The next morning, after his 14-hour ride to the KC ranch and back, Sheriff Angus joined with 40 more men. The churches and schools in Buffalo served as mobilization points for the men coming in to join the posse. The women of Buffalo prepared food for them, and arranged care for their families. After the men were fed, those who needed equipment repaired to Foote's store. They were then organized into bands of 20 men, and moved out to join the force investing the TA. The field commander of the operation was Arapahoe Brown, operator of a flour mill in town. His chief of staff was Elias Snyder, a pioneer rancher. Sheriff Angus spent most of his time in Buffalo organizing the overall operation. Robert Foote was quartermaster and commissary.

The Invaders were stunned by the size of the force opposing them. They had planned on help from some of the Johnson County residents, and reinforcements from Montana and Idaho, none of which had materialized. Their first two errors, going first to the KC ranch, and failing to kill Jack Flagg and his stepson, cost them time, the element of surprise, and the advantage of secrecy. It had also given the opposition ample notice of what to expect, and time to plan countermeasures. Additionally, they also had overestimated the appeal of, and sympathy for, their cause. They were now both outnumbered and surrounded, and their opposition was angry, well-armed and well-organized. When the part of the posse guarding the road into Buffalo intercepted and captured the Invaders' three wagons, the anger in town increased even more. The wagons contained hundreds of rounds of ammunition, dynamite, giant powder and handcuffs. In the surgical kit of Dr. Charles Bingham Penrose, the volunteer surgeon for the Invaders, they found a bottle of bichloride of mercury labeled "Poison." While its intended use was as an antiseptic for dressing wounds, the posse's interpretation was that they intended to poison wells. The kit also contained evidence that it belonged to Governor Barber, who was a surgeon, and had lent it to Penrose. Also in one of the wagons they found Frank

Canton's briefcase, containing a copy of the infamous "hit list," of those 70 men marked for death, including Robert Foote, Jack Flagg, Joe DeBarthe, and Sheriff Angus.⁵⁸

The number of posse members continued to grow, finally reaching nearly 500 men. A camp was set up nearby, out of range of rifle fire, so that the members could be fed and rest in shifts. The new arrivals were from as far away as the Montana border, and south to the Union Pacific Railroad.

The telegraph service to Buffalo finally was restored. For the first time. Acting Governor Barber learned of the precarious situation in which the Invaders found themselves. He ordered Capt. C. H. Parmalee of the Wyoming National Guard to mobilize his company and take control of the situation. Parmalee replied that the problem was too big for him to handle, and suggested that the Governor ask President Harrison to order the Fort McKinney troops to intervene and "restore order."

On Tuesday, April 12, Governor Barber sent a wire to President Harrison stating that there was an insurrection in Wyoming with open hostilities between "two large bodies of armed men." He requested that the President order out the troops at Fort McKinney to "assist in suppressing this insurrection." He failed to mention that one body of "armed men" was a legal posse, organized by the duly elected sheriff of the county, while the other body was an illegal, unconstitutional invading force from outside the state.⁵⁹ Also on Monday, it became clear that the situation at the TA ranch was close to a stalemate. The ranch buildings were built like a fortress, and while the Invaders could not escape, the posse members could not take them without suffering unacceptable casualties. At this juncture, Robert Foote went out to Fort McKinney and asked Colonel Van Horn, the commanding officer, for the loan of a cannon. When the Colonel politely refused the request, Foote then offered to pay \$500 for it, and was again refused.⁶⁰

Colonel Van Horn received orders at 12:30 a.m., April 13, to intervene. At 2 a.m., he set out for the TA ranch with three troops of the 6th Cavalry. Arapahoe Brown and Sheriff Angus told him they had no objection to the Invaders surrendering to Colonel Van Horn, provided they would be turned over to civil authorities for trial in the future.

Major Walcott came out under a flag of truce. He agreed to surrender to Colonel Van Horn, but stated he would never surrender to Sheriff Angus. The invaders were disarmed, and together with their horses, were taken

⁵⁸ *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, April 20, 1892.

⁵⁹ *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, April 13, 1892.

⁶⁰ Smith, 219.

Foote's General Store in Buffalo was a prime provisioning point for residents warding off the Invaders during the Johnson County War. The building burned in March, 1895, three years after the invasion.

American Heritage Center, UW



to Fort McKinney and placed under military guard in an empty barracks.⁶¹

The armed war was over. For Robert Foote and the others prominent in the ranks of the anti-Wyoming Stock Growers Association faction, the *sub rosa* war now began. The roundup scheduled by the Northern Wyoming Farmers' and Stock Growers' Association still was set to begin May 1. However, the membership took no steps to do the planning or organizing to get it started on time. No one had been named to replace Nate Champion as the roundup foreman. On May 3, U. S. District Judge John A. Riner, on behalf of the Western Union Beef Company, Wyoming Cattle Company, Ltd., and the Ogalalla Land and Cattle Company, issued two injunctions against thirty-six members of the association, prohibiting the roundup. Both Robert Foote, Sr., and Robert Foote, Jr., were named in the injunctions. U. S. Marshal Joe Rankin and his deputies served the injunctions.⁶²

The regular June roundups, scheduled by the Board of Livestock Commissioners, in accordance with state law, were revised slightly as to boundaries, times, and personnel. There were four roundup districts scheduled for Johnson County. All of the original roundup commissioners and foremen were among the Invaders, and were held with the rest under arrest at Fort D. A. Russell near Cheyenne. The State Board had to appoint replacement commissioners and foremen.⁶³

The Johnson County Board of Commissioners sent letters to all of the Johnson County livestock owners being held at Fort D. A. Russell inviting them to send "suitable, truthful, and trustworthy persons to their ranches, to attend to the roundup and preservation of

their property." They pledged the resources of the county to see that their rights and property were protected.⁶⁴

The roundups were opened to the small ranchers in the Powder River Basin for the first time as well. Robert Foote provided a wagon in support of his own crew, and the representatives of the other small ranchers who wished to use it. The relationship between the crews of the large ranches and the small ranchers was one of wariness, but there were no incidents.

At the request of Walter Stoll, an attorney for the cattlemen, on June 21 Edmund Churchill, Commissioner for the U. S. District Court in Cheyenne, issued arrest warrants for 21 Johnson County residents for "a conspiracy to obstruct and defeat the due course of justice, with intention to deny citizens the equal protection of the law, and to injure them and their property for lawfully attempting to enforce their rights to equal protection under the law."⁶⁵ U. S. District Judge John Riner, who was holding court in Kansas, had no knowledge that the warrants were sworn out. Neither did Benjamin F. Fowler,

⁶¹ *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, April 15, 1892.

⁶² Judge John H. Riner, U. S. District Judge for Wyoming, to W. H. H. Miller, United States Attorney General, August 3, 1892, including copies of the injunctions. Marshal Joseph Rankin File, National Archives.

⁶³ *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, May 3, 1892.

⁶⁴ *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, April 26, 1892.

⁶⁵ Statement, Joseph P. Rankin, United States Marshal for Wyoming, to the United States Attorney General, October 31, 1892, 13, 14. Appended to report, F. B. Crosthwaite, Investigator, United States Attorney General's Office, regarding Marshal Rankin's activities during the Johnson County Invasion, dated November 2, 1892. Attorney General's Files, National Archives.

Fowler, United States Attorney for Wyoming.⁶⁶ The warrants were part of a complex plot on the part of the cattlemen to force Rankin and his deputies to serve the arrest warrants, with the knowledge that in all probability, violence would result in which Rankin or his deputies could be killed. There would then be a legitimate reason for a request from Governor Barber, backed by Senators Warren and Carey, for President Harrison to invoke martial law on Johnson County. In effect, this would provide the results for the cattlemen that they had not achieved with the invasion.

Charles H. Burritt, Mayor of Buffalo, and one of the attorneys on retainer for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, also served as the intelligence center for the Association in Northern Wyoming. In a letter to Walter Stoll, dated May 8, 1892, he suggested that Robert Foote might "be reached" through W. A. Paxton of Omaha. Paxton was one of the owners of the Transfer Stockyards in Council Bluffs, Iowa; he had an interest in the Ogalalla Land and Cattle Company in Johnson County; he had belonged to the Wyoming Stock Growers Association since 1883; and, he owned a wholesale mercantile company in Omaha.⁶⁷ According to Burritt, Foote bought most of his merchandise from Paxton. He also stated that Foote banked in Omaha and owed large, outstanding balances. The implication was that if the Association applied pressure to Paxton to cut off Foote's credit, and to the Omaha banks to call their notes, it would effectively put Foote out of business. He also noted that Foote won the beef contract for Fort McKinney at \$5.84 per hundredweight when, in his opinion, the price should have been closer to \$7. "Does it not indicate that he intends to fill that contract with rustler beef; taken at a nominal figure by him to balance rustler accounts?" He also suggested that the brands on the hides of all the stock delivered by Foote to fill the contract should be carefully inspected.⁶⁸

On May 16, Burritt again wrote to Stoll. On May 10, to report the ambush murder of George Wellman, newly-appointed foreman of the Hoe ranch, who, at the request of the stock growers, had also been appointed Deputy U. S. Marshal by Marshal Rankin to help serve the criminal warrants issued by Commissioner Churchill. He outlined the testimony given so far in the inquest of the killing of Wellman, and promised to send him a complete transcript at the end of the inquest. He also wrote that J. J. McCullough, the owner of the stage line from the end of the railroad in Gillette to Buffalo, told him he was holding a shipment of 20 guns in Gillette, shipped express from Simmons Hardware and consigned to Robert Foote. The guns had not been delivered to Foote because they were too heavy for the stage to carry on the

muddy roads. Finally, he complained that he had not heard anything from Stoll or Judge Van Devanter, and still had not been provided with "the promised cipher" so he could have secure telegraph communication with them.⁶⁹ Burritt was dissatisfied with Sheriff Angus' investigation of the Wellman murder, so he had his own agents, presumably in the pay of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, start a separate investigation.

On May 24, Burritt again wrote to Stoll. He wrote that he had a visit from a "granger," John McCrae, who lived about seven miles from town. McCrae had inquired about how long they were going to have to live with a "rustler government," and "rustlers" controlling the range. He admitted that not all grangers were completely honest, that some, a minority, did occasionally rustle cattle from the large ranches, and that their sympathies were with the rustlers, but that they were not the majority. His next complaint was about Robert Foote's contract to supply beef to Fort McKinney "at a ruinous low figure for which he cannot afford to supply the post with honest beef." He added that Foote would fill the contract with rustled beef he took in payment for accounts on his books. He wanted a stock detective hired to check the brands on the hides of all the beef Foote slaughtered to fill the contract, and was willing to pay an assessment "to catch the thieves, as to have the thieves collect an assessment on his herd of cattle." He said he asked Foote why he was sending a wagon on the roundup since he only had a little bunch of cattle; "He was going to run a wagon for the 'rustlers' and that none but 'rustlers' should go with his wagon," was Foote's probably facetious answer.⁷⁰

The reason for Burritt's rancor toward Robert Foote may have been rooted in political rivalry within the Democratic Party. The Republican Party was being blamed for the invasion, largely because Senators Carey and Warren, Representative Clarence D. Clark, Judge Willis Van Devanter, and Acting Governor Barber, were all Republicans. They also all had a close relationship with the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. Senators Carey and Warren were Association members.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Letter, John H. Riner, Judge, Eighth Circuit, District of Wyoming, to Hon. W. H. H. Miller, United States Attorney General, August 3, 1892. Attorney General's Files, National Archives.

⁶⁷ Burroughs, 52, 184.

⁶⁸ Charles H. Burritt to Walter R. Stoll, May 8, 1892, Burritt Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

⁶⁹ Charles H. Burritt to Walter R. Stoll, May 16, 1892, Burritt Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

⁷⁰ Charles H. Burritt to Walter R. Stoll, May 24, 1892, Burritt Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

⁷¹ As a matter of fact, there were members of both parties on both sides of the issue. Stoll and Burritt were both attorneys for the cattlemen. Stoll also was chairman of the State Democratic Party. Burritt was active in Democratic politics and had political ambitions.

On July 3, 1892, Burritt wrote a letter to Frank Canton, who was also a Democrat who had run unsuccessfully for the House of Representatives from Johnson County in 1890.⁷² In his letter Burritt stated, "I am out of politics this year altogether. The firm of Robert Foote and Co. are running the political machine up here; at the County Convention yesterday [July 2] they had things all their own way."⁷³ He sent similar letters to Walter Stoll and to Samuel T. Corn.⁷⁴ Corn was a prominent attorney in Evanston, and a leading member of the Democratic Party in the western part of the state. He also was a justice in the Territorial Supreme Court.⁷⁵ Since Burritt was not part of the Johnson County delegation to the state Democratic Convention due to convene in Rock Springs, he was evidently trying to build support to thwart the Johnson County delegation in the event they took such undesirable action as introducing a plank in the party platform strongly condemning the invasion.

Under pressure from Senators Warren and Carey, and Governor Barber, on behalf of the stock growers, for President Harrison to declare martial law in Johnson County, the president responded with a compromise measure. Six troops of the 9th U.S. Cavalry, from Fort Robinson, Nebraska, were sent to the point where the Burlington Missouri Railroad planned to cross Powder River; six troops of the 6th U.S. Cavalry were sent to a point about half way between Casper and now-abandoned Fort Fetterman. Both encampments were close enough to Johnson County to move in quickly to reinforce the troops at Fort McKinney in case martial law was declared. The thin cover given for the movement of these troops was embodied in the statement, "The encampments thus made to be utilized for the purpose of instruction in tactics, etc."⁷⁶ The troops remained from June 10 until September 23, when four troops were removed from each encampment for duty at the Chicago Worlds' Fair. The last two troops were withdrawn from each on November 13.⁷⁷

The delegates from Johnson County to the Democratic State Convention were Robert Foote, O. H. "Jack" Flagg, Howard Rolles, Thad S. Cole, John R. Smith, and G. E. A. Moeller. The only two statewide offices to be filled were governor and United States representative. The party nominations at the Rock Springs Democratic Convention were Dr. John E. Osborne, of Carbon County, for governor, and Henry A. Coffeen, a banker from Sheridan, for United States Representative. In the general election, November 8, 1892, Dr. Osborne won the gubernatorial race over the Republican candidate, merchant-banker Edward Ivinson of Albany County; Henry A. Coffeen won over the Republican incumbent representative, Clarence D. Clark of Uinta County.⁷⁸

In one of the legislative contests, Foote was the Democratic nominee for the Johnson County seat in the State Senate. He also had been the party's nominee in the 1890 election, where he was opposed by Republican John N. Tisdale who won the election by 71 votes.⁷⁹ Tisdale was one of the owners of the Three T ranch, and was one of the Invaders. It was Tisdale's ranch where the Invaders' made their first stopover after leaving Casper. In the 1892 election Tisdale was in no position to run for a reelection, and the Republicans did not nominate another candidate to replace him. This time, Foote ran unopposed.

In spite of his political success, and the favorable outcome of the Johnson County invasion, Foote was in a precarious financial position. He lost between \$15,000 and \$20,000 in merchandise when he equipped the posse and very little of it was paid for or returned. He had the ongoing legal expenses for his defense in the case of the Federal indictment, as well as the legal expenses stemming from his suit against the State Livestock Board. In addition, the conspiracy charges against Robert Jr., on the warrant issued by Commissioner Churchill, still remained unresolved.

The Wyoming Supreme Court ruled against him in his case against the Board of Livestock Commissioners in a decision announced Feb. 9, 1893. The news brought loud cheers from John Clay, President of the Wyoming Stock Growers in the *Live Stock Report*, a weekly paper published by Clay, Robinson & Company, the commission house in which he was a partner.⁸⁰ Aside from los-

⁷² Virginia Cole Trenholm, ed., *Wyoming Blue Book*, II, (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Dept., 1972), 536.

⁷³ Charles S. Burritt to Frank M. Canton, July 3, 1892. Burritt Papers. American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

⁷⁴ Charles S. Burritt to Walter M. Stoll, and Samuel T. Corn, July 3, 1892. Burritt Collection. American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Arnold Stone, *Uinta County Its Place in History*, (Laramie: Laramie Printing Company, 1925), 170.

⁷⁶ *Cattle Troubles in the State of Wyoming and the Use of U.S. Troops in Suppressing Insurrection in the State*. 29763 P.R.D. 1892. War Department, reproduced from holdings of the National Archives, Record Group 94.

⁷⁷ In addition to the presence of troops, on July 30, as a further possible precedent to declaring martial law, President Harrison issued a Presidential Proclamation ordering "all persons within the State of Wyoming resisting the laws and processes of the courts of the United States, to cease such opposition and resistance and to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes on or before Wednesday, the third day of August next." Benjamin Harrison, *By the President of the United States of America, a Proclamation*, National Archives.

⁷⁸ T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2nd rev. ed., 1978), 268-288.

⁷⁹ Trenholm, 536.

⁸⁰ Lawrence M. Woods, *John Clay, Jr.: Commission Man, Banker and Rancher*, (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2001), 133.

ing the money for the three head of cattle, to Foote and the other small ranchers, the decision indicated that the Wyoming court system was not going to question the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, nor the system of marketing cattle it controlled.

As previously noted, the Federal criminal case of defrauding the Government for which Foote was indicted in 1891, finally came to trial in May 1894. Of the nine counts, the first count was removed on *nolle prosequi*, filed by Benjamin Fowler, United States District Attorney, and a jury found Foote innocent on the other eight counts.⁸¹ The criminal indictment against Robert, Jr., was thrown out earlier, so all the legal problems of the family were finally settled.

In the 1894 election, Foote was returned to the state senate for another two-year term. His opposition this time consisted of an Independent and a member of the Populist Party.⁸² The coalition between the Democratic and Populist Parties did not last through the previous term, and the Republican Party regained the governorship and the House of Representatives seat.⁸³

The army closed Fort McKinney. The loss was a blow to Buffalo, and to contractors such as Foote who had supplied it. Beef, fuel, feed grains, hay—all were locally procured for the post by contract, and were a lucrative source of income for the community. Additionally, the troops stationed at the post spent money in town. With the decline in the cattle business since the invasion, Buffalo's financial recovery had been slow, making the loss of the fort an even harder blow.

In March 1895, Foote's store burned to the ground. Some 30,000 pounds of sugar he had just received, and had stored in the back of the building, added to the fury of the fire. He had no insurance on the building or the stock. Foote's financial decline that started with the Johnson County War was completed by the fire.⁸⁴ Foote completed his second term as state senator from Johnson County in 1896, and did not run for office again, nor was he able to rebuild his store.

His son, Robert Foote, Jr., continued to run the family ranch. In 1906, he did what would have been impossible and unthinkable ten years earlier, he became a member of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association.⁸⁵ Once under a federal indictment brought about by some of its members, his brand listed as an outlaw brand by its inspectors, and a pariah to the organization's membership, he was now a part of it. This was probably partly due to changes in the nature of the organization, and partly due to a change in the way Robert Foote did business. It was a mark of the maturity and tolerance that developed in the Powder River Basin ranching industry. Changes in the rules for using public rangelands and water rights

revealed that many small ranchers had more problems in common with what remained of the large cattle companies than they had differences.

In 1916, Robert and Amanda Foote moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where they lived with their youngest son, Byron. Robert Foote died there on November 12, at the age of 82. He was buried in Phoenix with military honors.

Robert Foote had lived in Wyoming in 58 of its most exciting, adventurous years—the period when it was transformed from a raw, lawless frontier into a civilized state. Soldier, Indian fighter, freighter, postmaster, law officer, carpenter, merchant, tailor, politician—he was the epitome of the true pioneer. In his book on the Johnson County War, former governor Jack Gage said of Foote, "Much more could have and probably should have been said about this Buffalo storekeeper."⁸⁶ This is not true of just the Johnson County War, but of the history of the last half of the nineteenth century of the area which became Wyoming as well.

⁸¹ *United States vs Foote, et al.*, Jury Verdict, Records of the U. S. District Court for the District of Wyoming, National Archives, Denver Branch.

⁸² Trenholm, 544.

⁸³ Henry Coffeen proved to be an ineffectual legislator. His only success was getting the War Department to abandon Fort McKinney. He proposed to the Secretary of War that Fort McKinney be abandoned, and a new post built in his hometown of Sheridan. The War Department was happy to oblige him halfway, and abandoned Fort McKinney in 1894. Lewis L. Gould, *Wyoming From Territory to Statehood* (Worland: High Plains Publishing Co., 1989), 216. A new post, Fort MacKenzie, was built in Sheridan in 1899. See Gould, 129, 130.

⁸⁴ Buffalo Centennial Committee, *Buffalo's First Century*, (Buffalo: Buffalo Centennial Committee, 1984), 5.

⁸⁵ Burroughs, 201.

⁸⁶ Jack R. Gage, *The Johnson County War: Ain't a Pack of Lies* (Cheyenne: Flintlock Publishing Company, 1967), "The Rustler's Side," 75.

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Murdered by Madness

The Case of Geneva Collett

By Larry K. Brown



Colorado State Archives

On a cold March 19, 1927, Geneva Collett lamented, "This is a bad day to start what I have before me. I was hop-

ing the sun would be shining and the birds singing so I would have something happy to remember the world by. The

weather makes me blue... and I'm sorry." She had just entered the Colorado State Penitentiary as inmate #13916.

In 1925, a woman named Geneva Collett lived in Wyoming. In that 30th year of her life, some thought her to be good and kind, as well as one who feared God and shunned those things thought to be bad. But in a span of but 22 months, shame and grief filled her heart. In fact, the Lord's own much-plagued Job may well have wailed and failed if he had tried to match her woe for woe.

In January 1925, one of her brothers, Robert, passed a fistfull of bad

checks to land in the Colorado State Penitentiary. Robert, about 37 years old, was charged on criminal counts of having passed bad checks and "unlawfully and feloniously obtained money from one I.H. Williams by means of a confidence game." He was convicted in Glenwood Springs, on Nov. 11, 1926. The judge sentenced him to 3 to 4 years on Dec. 1, 1926.¹

A lightning bolt stunned her father as he walked horses at his southern

Montana ranch. Eight months later, he stirred up and drank a glass of water and cyanide, not the mix with baking soda that he thought would cure his upset stomach. Samuel A. Collett, rancher [age 67], died within five minutes at his ranch [at "First Ck., Big Horn Co., Mont."] after accidentally ingesting the poison that he had purchased the previous winter to kill coyotes. His place was located six miles west of Senator John B. Kendrick's OW ranch, 40 miles

northeast of Sheridan. At the time of the accident, Collett was with Charles Winters, "a former rider for the Flying V ranch" with whom he had shared quarters since about 1917.²

As her family grieved, Geneva's sister, Pearl, split with her husband and she took in her mother, sister, as well as Robert's young daughter, Virgie. To help make ends meet, she opened a boarding house in Sheridan that specialized in "hot and cold running maids."³ Authorities frowned on the niece's life in such a place, so they had Virgie placed in the Wyoming Girls' Industrial Institute.⁴

With Geneva's morale in shreds, her surgeon told her, for reasons not clear, that she would need surgery to slice out parts that he deemed not only as key to her physical well-being, but to the stability of her mind.⁵

While she was still on the mend, her brother Robert's fiancée, Mattie, joined the Collett family in Sheridan. There, they pooled their cash and Geneva signed a \$1,000 promissory note to hire an attorney, who they hoped would bring her male sibling Robert back home.⁶

Robert's fiance--the bride-to-be--lodged with the Colletts, she met and fell for Shorty, a Sheridan barber who was Pearl's live-in lover. What next? The pair eloped and stiffed the Colletts with a pile of bills. Although Mattie had been working at the local Superior Laundry, she left town on Oct. 14, 1926, and apparently linked up the following day after Shorty also skipped town. They went to Alliance, Neb., where they were married, then went to Davidson, Okla., before continuing on to Shorty's home in Frederick. But a warrant was out on Mattie and she was arrested.⁷

Following Mattie's capture, she was returned by Sheridan County Sheriff George Lord to Sheridan on Friday, October 29, and charged with "obtaining money under false pre-

tenses." On their way back from Oklahoma, Mattie asked Sheriff Lord to stop off at Denver to see Attorney Ben B. Laska, who she said could substantiate her claim that he had received the money from the Sheridan National Bank through a draft signed by Pearl Logan. The defense attorney had taken Robert Collett's case after being paid \$2,000. The family raised \$1,200 – which was paid by Mrs. Collett on Sept. 24, 1926. Before the case went to trial, she paid him \$300 more and gave him a note for \$500. To help defray those costs, Mattie gave Mrs. Collett a promissory note for \$1,000, which she said she would repay within two years out of the \$65 a month that she received from her dead husband's war insurance. After collecting his expenses, Laska subsequently agreed to withdraw from Robert's case and return the money to the family.

Mattie was released on a bond of \$500 to secure her appearance in circuit court planned for that November 4.⁸

With her past so plagued, Geneva called on a fortune teller in the last week of October 1926 and begged her for the "money card": the ace of diamonds.⁹ She said she "had to obtain a large sum" ...and soon. But, as bad as Geneva's life may have been, neither she nor the card reader could know that a far worse fate lay in wait. But, she would learn that at 2 p.m. on Monday, November 1, 1926, when she went to the Toggery Shop, a lady's

"ready-to-wear" store at 176 North Main Street in Sheridan.¹⁰

"Hello, Mattie. How are you?" The voice came from near a rack of coats.

"Hello, Geneva," replied the new bride as she went to step toward the front door.

With that swift swap of pleasantries, the smile left Geneva's face and she pulled a .38 caliber Colt revolver from her coat pocket and fired five shots – point blank – at her one-time friend. Four slugs found their mark: two hit Mattie's arms, the third hit her in the back while the fourth struck the lobe of her left lung and clipped a chunk from her aorta.¹¹

In the next few seconds, as store



Courtesy of Betty Oehlman (Pearl's granddaughter)

Geneva Collett (left) and a woman, probably her older sister Pearl, soon after they had moved with their parents, Samuel A. and Mary Jane "Jenny" Collett, to Sheridan in 1917. Geneva was born Feb. 17, 1895, and Pearl, Feb. 4, 1893, both in Sweetwater, Texas.



"Over the Moon," the store in the same building and at the same address as the Toggery Shop where the crime took place, also specializes in women's wear.

owners June and Vera Fulmer tried to hide. Mattie spun and her wounds spewed blood as she raced to the rear of the room. But then, in shock, she turned in vain and flailed her way back toward the light that shone through the large panes of plate glass at the front of the building. A trail of dark red drops marked her round-trip path before she fell and died near the door.¹²

Still stunned by what she had seen, June heard Geneva say. "She double crossed me." Then, the tall woman loped with gun in hand out the back way and down the alley to the Winterling & Davis garage. From there, she phoned the Sheridan County sheriff's office to tell what she had done. It fell to Deputy John H. Ladd, who took the call, to rush to the Nash dealership on West

Brundage Street, where he nabbed her.¹³

Less than an hour prior to that crime, the feuding families had settled their legal differences. When Mattie paid Pearl her board bill and gave back the diamond ring Geneva's brother Robert once had put on her hand, the Colletts tore up her outstanding note.¹⁴ According to police officer Elsie Wood, who first responded to the shooting, he had been present in the office of R.E. McNally a few minutes before when the agreement between Mattie and the Colletts had been reached. "[S]he signed a contract to pay the note, the money to come at \$50 monthly from her government insurance, her first husband having

been killed [during World War I] overseas. In addition to this, she agreed to pay her board bill, turn over a diamond ring which had belonged to Bob Collett, and further agreed to immediately pay an account at the Toggery Shop which Pearl Logan had guaranteed. The charges against her were then dropped."¹⁵

But on that day, Mattie went next to the Toggery Shop to pay off the \$9.70 bill that she owed. As she did that, her husband, Shorty, took her seven-year-old son, Charles, to the Pallas Candy Kitchen for a treat. They said they would wait there for her. (E.A. Evans and Walter Davis, who barbered at the OK barber shop with Shorty Tidwell, testified that they saw Geneva and Pearl "going north on the east side of the street, and Mr. and Mrs. Tidwell walking

almost opposite them at the same time on the other side of the street, shortly before the shooting.")¹⁶

When she failed to show, they went to the dress shop and found her stone dead on the floor, with her arms stretched out and foam on her lips. Mattie's body was taken to the Champion funeral home, where her autopsy was conducted.¹⁷ Later, her body was shipped to Cincinnati, Ohio, for burial.¹⁸

Sheriff Lord later testified that after Geneva had been brought to his jail, she admitted that "I've done something awful." And, the next day, "she asked to vote as it was election day."¹⁹

In the next few weeks, Geneva shared a Sheridan County Jail cell with "Moonshine Mary Beloburk."²⁰ As she awaited trial, at least some who came to call found her more shamed by her darned stockings than by the crime with which she had been charged.

On November 17, Geneva appeared at court in the sheriff's custody to plead "not guilty" as charged in the complaint.²¹ By agreement of counsel and the defendant, she would return before Judge Hoop the following day at 1:30 p.m.

On November 18, as the accused slept beneath a flowered comforter on an iron cot, a few newsmen stopped at her cell. When they found her at rest, they turned to leave. "No, don't go," she said, as she roused from her sleep. "I'll get up. It seems good to see somebody. Gee, but I get lonesome." First though, she slipped patent leather pumps on her feet and combed fingers through her bobbed hair, blushed with a touch of dye. That done, she and the men walked to a room next door. There, as she stooped to take a seat, she found some flaws in her blonde silk hose. Shamed by what she saw, she moaned, "I could never darn very

well" and pulled down the hem of her fine wool dress so as to hide her knees.

Geneva told the newsmen that "she did not know Mattie was in the Toggery when she went there to pay for a pair of stockings she had bought there the week before."

As if to break the ice, Geneva picked up a sack of grapes from a stand and shared them with her guests. That is when one of the men asked why she had shot Mattie Tidwell. Her face went blank. "She double-crossed me," she said. That line had served as her mantra since the law first took her in tow. But, in the next breath, she seemed to change her mind.

I don't think I ever shot her. Nobody can make me believe I did. I don't believe I ever went there with a gun in the first place. I went there to pay a bill. What would I have a gun for, just to pay a bill? . . . I wish people would quit asking me about the gun. I don't know anything about it. I'm tired of hearing about the old gun.¹⁹

Would she say she killed in self-defense, they asked. Geneva shook her head from side-to-side. Well then, would she plead insanity? To that, she gave no clue. She just rubbed her right arm from which blood had been drawn for tests. "It hurts," she said. "They must have taken a quart." She also whined that she found it hard to sleep at night, because "the wind whistles around the jail so hard." And she added: "The fellows upstairs [prisoners?] eat onions all the time to make them sleepy, but they can't sleep either."²⁰

But, though she may have bad-mouthed her doctors and the noise, she gave thanks to the jail's staff, who had been good to her. Most of all, she praised the "good neighbor" Serb with whom she shared her cell. Mary, she said, "took care of me

when I was sick a while back. Wish she could get out. I feel sorry for anybody who has to stay here."²¹

At 1 p.m. that day [November 18], Justice of the Peace J. F. Hoop called her to his court for a preliminary hearing. There, County Attorney and Prosecutor John F. Songer charged that Geneva had murdered Mattie in the "first degree." Without counsel, the accused sat with her head bowed and hands clasped in her lap. Only when the judge asked how she would plead did she stand, step toward his bench and speak. "Not guilty," she said in a low, soft voice. A bailiff then led her back to her cell.²²

One week later, as Geneva stood mute, but moved her head in reply to the court's questions, Judge Hoop ruled that she would be bound over to the Fourth Judicial District Court to be tried for first degree murder. Until then, the judge said, she would be held in jail without bail and given a thorough "insanity investigation."²³

At the followup hearing, testimony by Toggery Shop owners/operators June and Vera Fulmer, Deputy Sheriff Ladd, and Coroner Dr. W. A. Steffen convinced the judge that a sanity investigation was in order. According to Wyoming law, an insanity hearing at that time could be requested for any person in jail awaiting trial or otherwise serving sentence by any relative or by any officer or citizen of the county. Such an insanity hearing would have to be held, however, within "a reasonable time" after the petition was filed. Geneva's next

appearance would be on November 22. A committee of nine physicians was assigned to examine her: Dr. R. W. Soper and Dr. Henry W. Barrier of the U.S. Veterans' Bureau at Fort Mackenzie, and seven Sheridan physicians: Drs. W. A. Steffen, S. W. Johnson, R. E. Crane, T. E. Marshall, W. H. Roberts, V. J. Keating, and C. E. Stevenson.

The state contended later that the defense attorneys, "in company with a group of doctors, appeared before the board of [Sheridan] county commissioners early in the year in an attempt to avoid a trial; and make a settlement on a guilty plea of manslaughter." The state further contended "that county attorney Cone refused the manslaughter plea and that the commissioners declared they had no criminal jurisdiction and that the case would have to go to court."

Prosecutor Songer filed his Information [indictment] the following week [November 30], charging that



Dr. C. E. Stevenson, Sheridan physician, removed Geneva Collett's appendix in March 1925.

Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library

Geneva "did wilfully, unlawfully, feloniously, purposely and with pre-meditated malice kill and murder Mattie Tidwell, a human being."²⁶ In the meantime, Geneva's family hired for her the best local attorneys their money could buy: the team of Metz, Sackett & Metz.²⁷ As the defense planned its strategy, the State's prosecutors, Maurice A. Cone – Songer's recently elected successor – and his chief aide, Charles A. Kutcher, moved forward to trial.

On February 11, 1926, they took a statement from Mrs. Tudor Smith, whose poor health, they knew, would keep her from taking the stand at Geneva's trial. In her deposition, the beautician swore that she had first met the accused the prior spring when she came to her shop to have her hair shampooed and curled. After that, Geneva returned, she said, "I imagine once a month." But her last visit to the beauty parlor in the Jackson Apartments – about 2:30 p.m., the Friday before the shooting – proved the most memorable. Though, Tudor claimed Geneva had "Never before complained of anything" and that "She was always more or less of a good disposition," this time the beautician said she saw a great change. When chided that she had not made an appointment, Geneva snapped back, "Well, that I would have to do it any way [sic] because this may be the last time [I] would get this done, maybe [I] would have to go to jail."²⁸

Then, as Geneva had her hair treated, she suddenly blurted "that Pearl was going to get them, or one of them...Mattie Morgan and Shorty Tidwell." Because of what she had heard of their

ill will from her other customers, Mrs. Smith said this came as no shock. But then Geneva "made a remark--something about [Mattie] taking her money and leaving her mother ill and breaking Pearl's heart" when she wed Shorty. Still, even though Geneva sometimes "would have been drinking" before she came in to the shop, Mrs. Smith told Cone that on this occasion, she seemed "perfectly normal." In fact, she said, "I took the whole conversation more as a joke than anything else. She didn't talk like she was serious."²⁹

Before the accused murderer could be brought back to court as planned later that month, measles swept through the town, and as the sole prisoner in the Sheridan County Jail's woman's ward, Geneva caught a bad case of the "spots."³⁰

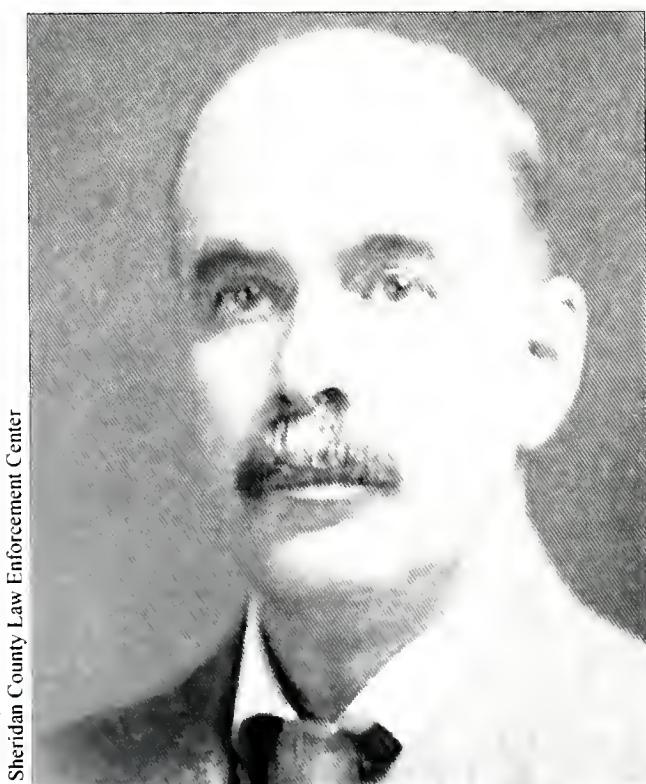
Once back on her feet, however, the law marched her to the district courtroom of Judge Harry P. Ilsley,

who first heard her case on the morning of March 7, 1927.³¹ She sat in front of the jury box, at the end of defense table.³²

If the jurors or the crowd that came there hoped to find proof of guilt in her eyes, they failed. As one scribe wrote, "her face rests on her hand most of the time." At other times of the trial, she sat with head bowed low. It so drooped, in fact, that her black felt hat blocked from view her large grey eyes.

While some may not have seen her full face, most made note – especially the many women in the gallery – of what she wore as well as her demeanor: "a tan wool dress and with a plaid coat resting over the back of her chair...comely, neat and exacting...of striking appearance." In fact, said one woman, she "was the last one in the world you would expect to see in such a position."³³

The spectators wanted to hear of her life. They found out that her mother had given birth to her in Sweetwater, Texas, on February 17, 1895. She gained her education in that town's public classrooms, culminating in a high school diploma. From that small town, she went to Dallas, where she graduated from a business college. At the age of twenty-two, she moved with her family to Sheridan. When she found no stenographic or book-keeping positions available there, she went to work for Eula Kendrick, the wife of Senator Kendrick at the famed OW Ranch. That November, she moved to Buffalo, Wyoming, and worked briefly for the Buffalo-Clearmont Railroad before going to Casper where she kept books for a year at the Henning Hotel.



Sheriff George Lord, who "hosted" her in the Sheridan County Jail, drove Corlett to Casper in his roadster and then escorted her by train to the prison in Canon City, Colo..

Sheridan County Law Enforcement Center

Both Photos, Wyoming State Archives, Division of Cultural Resources



Judge Harry P. Ilsley presided over the Collett trial in 4th District Court in the Sheridan County Courthouse.

She also worked in that city for three years at the Elgin Shoe and Clothing Store. In 1923, she apparently accepted a position with a wholesale house and clerked in a grocery store at Billings, Montana.

After brief stints there, Geneva hopped a train to California. She later said that she stayed for two years, but had to leave when she had "spent all her money." After moving back to Wyoming, she worked a short time in a railroad office in Rock Springs. She returned to Billings to apply for a job there, but she had to have a major operation.³³

Those who sat through her trial would hear, too, more than they may have wished to have known about her state of mind when she came back from Montana just four months prior to Mattie's murder. As defense witnesses trooped to the stand, many of them—including Dr. C.E. Stevenson, who operated on her—told of "a great change in her condition since her last operation that past June."

Dr. R.P. Smith, a defense expert, said he had diagnosed her "with that form of insanity generally known to experts as *catatonia dementia praecox*... a type of schizophrenia. He

added: "There is a point of tolerance in everyone and if that line is passed the person breaks in mind." He classified the defendant "as belonging to the class of insane patients, termed 'shut-ins,' who live in a world to themselves and see their wishes as true."³⁴

Why, asked some who thought that she may have feigned madness, did she call the sheriff's office if she did not know right from wrong? "Because," said Dr. Smith, "she considered that a part of finishing her job, and she was under such stimulus that she was revived to some consciousness, although she soon lapsed back into her former condition." Contrary to his colleague Dr. Stevenson's opinion, Smith said that he believed "it was not the final operation that caused the contended insanity of the defendant." Rather, he said, "the shock of her father's death was the prime thing that made her insane."³⁵

Her mother, too, found her daughter's sad state hard to bear. As she sat next to Geneva at the defense table, she tried to look in her daughter's eyes, but scarce got a glance back. Nor did they seem to share but a few words.³⁶ Perhaps to

try to bridge that gap as well as to help make Geneva feel a bit more comfortable in the court, Mrs. Collett midway through the trial brought her daughter a round pillow, about the size of a chair seat, made of soft yellow fabric on which flowers had been sewn, and trimmed with a blue bow.³⁷ Even that kind act did not seem to help.³⁸

One of the few things, however, that did seem to make Geneva's face light up came at the mid-point in her trial. In those days—at least in the Sheridan County Jail—the guards let their female prisoners shave the men who served time there. It came out in testimony that Geneva, more than once, had groomed a fellow prisoner named Frank Snively. When he swore that he "knew positively she was insane," the State's attorney, Kutcher, at once turned to the jury. "Do you believe Frank would have allowed her to shave him if he thought her to be insane?" he asked with a keen edge to his voice. While it seems the jurors did their best to keep still, much the crowd of 80 or more—mostly women—burst into laughter. Geneva smiled, too.³⁹

With the sounds of such levity, as



Local History Center, Canon City Public Library

Geneva Corlett was incarcerated in the Colorado State Penitentiary, Canon City, from March 19, 1927, to May 30, 1930, when she was moved to the Kansas State Industrial Farm for Women in Lansing, Kansas.

well as the facts of the case, still in their ears, the jurors filed from the court about 9:45 p.m., Saturday evening, March 12. It took them but three hours and twenty-five minutes to reach their decision, which came soon after midnight. When they went back to the near-empty room, they saw Geneva sitting next to Sheriff Lord. She must have steeled herself for what she feared might come, for when the jury foreman, H.E. Zullig, said his group had found her "guilty of murder in the first degree without capital punishment," it is said that she moved not a muscle...made not a sign as to how she felt. Judge Hilsley left the courtroom to weigh all that he had heard before sentencing.⁴⁰

On Monday [March 14], he came back to his bench at 11 a.m. "Did she [Geneva] have more to say?" he asked. She stood and raised her chin from her chest. "No," she said. The judge set her sentence. She would sent to the "Colorado State Penitentiary for female prisoners... near Cañon

City... to be therein kept, and confined for the period of time, during your natural life at hard labor." Wyoming, at that time, did not have a place in which to house its own female prisoners.⁴¹

Geneva became the first-ever



Robert K. Collett, Inmate #13729, met his sister briefly in prison in Colorado. He was paroled Nov. 12, 1928, after serving 23 months. His eventual whereabouts are not known.

Museum of Colorado Prisons

woman in Wyoming to be given a life sentence.⁴² Despite the deep despair that verdict may have brought her, she did her best while back in the jail to keep on a "game face" when her mother and the press came to call. On the day prior to her departure to prison, she told a reporter, "You want something to put in the paper about me today, don't you? Well, I don't blame you, and it's all right with me." She got up and gave the man her own chair in the small cage. She then walked to the window and gazed out the same bars through which she had watched the world since the day of Mattie's murder. When asked if the ruling had surprised her, she shook her head and said, with the trace of a sob, "No. Tell them that I'm taking my medicine, and thank God I'm not a quitter."⁴³

On Thursday, as usual, Geneva got up, cleaned her cell, and smoothed her bunk. Just past noon, Geneva took hold of her jail-mates' hands, then bid them "Goodbye, and may God bless you." Sheriff Lord then led her past her sobbing mother, who had spent the last two days with her there in the jail. Her sister, Pearl, stood by, too, as the lawman led the lady into the street.⁴⁴ Lord helped her in to the roadster parked at the curb as the wife of Undersheriff G. A. Braucht took a seat next to her. With Lord at the wheel, the three left for Casper to catch a train for Denver. They spent the night there. The next day, they drove to Cañon City, where they arrived at 9:45 p.m., that evening. With the prison closed by that time, they checked into the Strathmore Hotel.⁴⁵

The next morning [Saturday, March 19], after she sent a wire to let her mother know she had arrived safely, Geneva and Mrs.

Braucht left their suite to join Sheriff Lord for a breakfast of grapefruit, toast, eggs, and coffee. Later, in the lobby, she said, "This is a bad day to start what I have before me. I was hoping the sun would be shining and the birds singing so I would have something happy to remember the world by. The weather makes me blue...and I'm sorry."⁴⁶

At 10 a.m., Geneva donned her felt fedora and plaid wool coat, with its lush fur collar, pulled high and close to her neck. The three walked "seemingly carefree" through a snow storm to the front gate of the Colorado State Penitentiary. An armed guard let them past the great door. Once inside the "bull pen" [check-in room], the calm, dry-eyed Geneva with "an embarrassed smile" took pen in hand and signed in as "Prisoner #13916." A person there noted, "Too bad, she sure don't look like the kind of fish we usually get here." Nonetheless, they snapped her mugshot, inked her prints, medically inspected her, and logged her vitals:

Age: 32, Height: 5' 8-1/2", Weight: [blank], Complexion: Fair, Color of Eyes: Gray, Color of Hair: Brown, Occupation: Bookkeeper, Where Born: Texas, Name of Parents: Mrs. S.A. Collett (mother), 260 No. Main, Sheridan, WY, Religion: Methodist⁴⁷

With that done, the prison matron, Mary Fitzgerald, marched her off to the woman's ward, where she plucked the fine feathers from her new jail bird and had her wear an inmate's blue and white garb.⁴⁸ The square-necked dress, made of a coarse, small-checked cloth, hung like a sack on Geneva's lank frame. Once dressed, she went to her small cell, where she spent the next few days adjusting to her new life. The room, bare but for a steel cot, had one port from which she could see the neat, frost-edged lawn that sloped south to a tall stone wall.⁴⁹

Once in those first days, her keepers let her meet and talk for a few minutes with her brother, Robert, who like her, made his home there

behind bars. Apparently, they did not speak again.⁵⁰

Like the 50 or so other women with whom she lived, she soon learned how to cope with her new life. That meant, for example, sweeping her cell each morn as well as eating her meals with a bone-handled knife and fork of black steel from an aluminum dish.⁵¹

While Geneva did her best to live day to day, her mother, friends, and attorneys did all that they could to have the Wyoming Supreme Court throw out the district court decision.⁵² When that did not work, they tried to get Wyoming's Board of Pardons as well as the Governor to act in her behalf. Those maneuvers failed, too.⁵³

The Kansas Women's Industrial Farm at Lansing, where Geneva Collett was serving her sentence when she died Oct. 5, 1930. Collett's body was buried in the cemetery in Sweetwater, Texas.



Russell Jones, Sweetwater, Texas



Kansas State Historical Society

In December 1929, a foe swore to do what her friends could not: put an end to her suffering. Geneva saved the life of her matron when a young Black woman convict tried to stab the official with a pair of shears. Though the guard at once locked up the would-be assassin, the inmate made it clear that she would soon try to take Geneva's life. And, said the warden, he feared "what might happen when she is released."⁵⁴

Faced with that threat to Geneva, as well as with the rising costs at the Colorado prison, Wyoming's officials moved quickly to find a new home for their women inmates.⁵⁵ Four months later, of the 12 states that had been contacted, just the Kansas State Industrial Farm for women at Lansing seemed willing to take what Wyoming could pay: \$1.25 per day per prisoner. According to Wyoming's State Auditor, Roscoe Alcorn, who went to see the place,

they use a cottage system and for two years there had not been an escape. They now have 475 prisoners. They keep them employed at housework and farm work. They have an orchard in connection with the farm and they carry on some special industries such as basket-making. The work seemed to be organized very efficiently.⁵⁶

Consequently, the officials struck a deal. Wyoming began transferring their prisoners on May 1, 1930, to the Sunflower State, where Geneva would spend the rest of her life.⁵⁷

So, what may we learn from this tale? First, there is no moral here. It is the story of a woman, whose one terrible deed tried to steal her soul. It also shaped what few years she had left, and those came to an end with a heart attack about 1:20 p.m., on Sunday, October 5, 1930. Prison officials found her when they took lunch to her cell.⁵⁸

When her mother and sister learned

of that death, they rushed to Lansing and took her body back to Texas, the place of her birth. There, her body was buried on October 8, deep in the hot, dry soil in the City Cemetery of Sweetwater, Texas.⁵⁹

But, unlike Job in his last days, Geneva won no wealth...had no spouse or child...found no peace on earth. Death was *her* reward.

¹ "Check Artist in Toils," *Durango Evening Herald*, Durango, Colo., 20 Jan. 1925, 1; also, "This Fellow Handy With Fountain Pen," *Glenwood (Colo.) Post*, 23 Jan. 1925, 1; "Collins Has A Shady Record," *Glenwood Post*, 29 Jan. 1925, 1; "Four Glenwood Prisoners Stage Another Jail Break," *Glenwood Post*, 5 Mar. 1925, 1; "Robert K. Collett Is Convicted by Jury," *Glenwood Post*, 11 Nov. 1926, 1. He was paroled on 12 Nov. 1928. Robert K. Collett, Inmate #13729. Colorado State Penitentiary files. Colorado State Archives.

² "Rancher Takes Poison Potion Instead of Baking Soda and Is Dead Within Few Minutes," *Sheridan (Wyo.) Post-Enterprise*, 1 Apr. 1926, 1, 2; also, J. Heath, Deputy Clerk of District Court, Hardin, Mont., to author, 5 Apr. 2001; "Geneva Collett, Girl Slayer, Says 'She Double-Crossed Me,'" *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 18 Nov. 1926, 1; Geneva Collett, Certificate of Death, Kansas State Board of Health, Div. of Vital Statistics. Sam was born in Rockwood, Tenn., and he married Jennie Harrison, (b. Johnson County, Tex.). Their oldest child, William Burl (W.B.) was born 24 Mar. 1882, at Alvarado, Tex. In Nov. 1889, the family moved to Nolan County and settled seven miles north of Roscoe. In 1890, they moved to Sweetwater, where their second child, Robert K., was born. The family later moved into Roscoe. About 1917, Sam and Jennie moved to Sheridan, where they split that year, before Sam moved north into southern Montana, where he homesteaded southeast of Billings, south of Hardin. He was buried in the Mount Hope Cemetery, later renamed the Sheridan Municipal Cemetery. Their eldest son, W.B., died in 1964, and was buried in Texas. "W.B. Collett Roscoe Rites Set Tuesday," *Sweetwater (Tex.) Reporter*, 7 Dec. 1964. According to Heath, Sam's death certificate is "filed in the Big Horn County Clerk and Recorder's Office in Hardin, [but] no probate record or record of inquest could be found following his death."

³ "Mary J. Collett Succumbs Here," *Sheridan Press*, 3 May 1932, 2; *Sheridan Press*, 20 Jul 1977; "[Clayton] Logan Dies,"

Sheridan Press, 5 May 1972; "Working Girls," by Larque Richter, *Sheridan Press*, 21 Aug 1999; Minutes re: Girls' Industrial Institute, Wyoming Board of Charities & Reform, Book J, 6 June 1927, 53-54, 386, 10 March 1930, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne. Mrs. Collett died at Pearl's home at 260 North Main St., in Sheridan on May 3, 1932, at the age of 70. She was a member of the Methodist Church, buried in the Sheridan Municipal Cemetery. She was born in Johnson Co., Tex., while her father, Benjamin Harrison, was born in Tennessee and her mother, "Miss Frost," was born in Alabama. [Sheridan, WY, Funeral Records, Funeral #1619, p. 225].

Pearl [also known as Mrs. Pearl Logan; Mrs. Collett; Mrs. Charles A. Cook] died at Memorial Hospital in Sheridan July 19, 1977. At her death she lived at 183 West 5th St., Sheridan, with her daughter Lorena H., and son-in-law, William Fluke. Born Feb. 4, 1893, in Sweetwater, Tex., she was preceded in death by her "husband," Ira L. Logan, who died in 1961, and by a son, Clayton Logan, in 1971. [No wedding certificate has been found.] She was buried in the Sheridan Municipal Cemetery 23 Jul 1977. [Sheridan, Wyoming, Funeral Records, 162] She also had referred to herself as Mrs. Cook, the wife of Charles A. Cook, with whom she lived, according to a *Sheridan City Directory*, in 1933-1934, although no marriage certificate has been found. According to Richter, who wrote the "Working Girls" article, "Pearl Logan...was one of the best known local madams [in Sheridan]. She operated rooming houses for at least 40 years...The Rex [which was closed by 1965] was a large rooming house with up to five ladies of the night in residence. Local old-timers say Logan had great rapport with law enforcement, tenants and the girls. She was known for holding money for sheepherders and ranch hands who came to town for a bender or an entire off season. Their summer wages were safe from being stolen or blown gambling because of Logan..." Hugh Bird, recalled, "I was in the cab business at that time, 1950-52. They [the prostitutes and madams] used to be pretty good tippers... The Rex was the big house you know, that was Pearl Logan. That's where Sheriff Marshall was shot. It was the biggest one, yeah. We didn't make much for tips then; they were always good for 50 cents or a dollar. Fares were 35 or 40 cents."

On 13 July 1928, 640 acres of land previously owned by "Logan, Pearl E." was incorporated into the Kendrick OW Ranch's holdings. Bucky King, *The Empire Builders: The Development of Kendrick Cattle Company* (Privately printed, 1992), 57. Pearl and her husband, Ira, were employees on the OW Ranch in October 1917. King, 100. Other

Kendrick records show a "Mr. Collett," – presumably, Pearl's father, Sam – who was paid \$14.65 for 11 days' work in June 1924. Pearl's daughter, Lorena was born 6 Jan. 1910, in Odessa, Tex.; her father was Ira L. Logan. She married William Fluke in 1942, in Nevada, and the couple moved to Sheridan in 1978. She died in the Memorial Hospital there on 7 Dec 1983, at age 73. "Lorena H. Fluke," *Sheridan Press*, 8 Dec 1983. William Fluke was 93 when he died 28 Mar 1988.

⁴ At the time of the first action, the Board authorized Virgie's parole to her maternal grandmother, who lived at Sweetwater, Tex. At the time of the subsequent action, she was paroled to "a fine old couple," Mr. and Mrs. F.H. Lawton in Berkeley, Calif. Virgie, however, apparently "got homesick and ran away." After authorities picked her up, they determined that she "had gone to San Francisco and found employment with a good family taking care of children."

⁵ Dr. C. E Stevenson, who removed her appendix, also carried out this operation. "Geneva Collett on Trial for Her Life," "Insanity Plea Offered By Defense," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 9 Mar 1927, 1; "Alienists Testify In Collett Trial," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 10 Mar 1927, 1; "Jury Did Ignore Expert Testimony," *Sheridan Journal*, 1;

⁶ "Genevieve Collett Shot and Killed Mrs. B.F. Tidwell Here," *Sheridan Journal*, 4 Nov 1926, 1, 4; "Events Leading to Murder of Mattie Tidwell," *Sheridan Journal*, 10 Mar 1927, 1.

⁷ Shorty and his brother, Hartley, lodged at Pearl's rooming house at Main and Alger streets at the same time as had Mattie Morgan. Hartley said at Geneva's trial that he "had been acquainted with the Colletts while in Texas." Twenty-four year-old Mattie, born in Tennessee, was the daughter of A.M. and Fannie (nee Fepter [sic]). Before he left Sheridan, 33-year-old Shorty had worked there as a barber at the OK shop. He was born in Texas, the son of George and Syrlde [sic] (nee Ribble) Tidwell. "Story of Tidwell Shooting Retold," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 8 Mar 1927, 1; "Genevieve Collett Shot and Killed Mrs. B.F. Tidwell Here," *Sheridan Journal*, 4 Nov 1926, 1, 4; "Events Leading to Murder of Mattie Tidwell; Marriage Certificate, Dept. of Public Welfare, Bureau of Health-Division of Vital Statistics, Lincoln, 18 Oct 1926; "Married By Judge," *Alliance (Neb.) News*, 21 Oct 1926, 1; "Sheridan Has Killing Affair in Which Principals are Both Women," *Alliance News*, 11 Nov 1926; "Inquest Wednesday," *Sheridan Journal*.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ According to Margaret Laybourn, a Cheyenne writer, the ace of diamonds is the "money card" for those who need a large sum quickly.

¹⁰ The building at the address is occupied by a different store now, but it also sells women's clothing.

¹¹ "Genevieve Collett Shot..."; "Geneva Collett on Trial for Her life," *Sheridan Journal*, 10 Mar 1927, 1; "Sheridan Has Killing Affair..."; "Effort To Prove Geneva Collett Insane Leaves Woman Slayer Expressionless Through Longs Days in Courtroom Here," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 10 Mar 1927, 1.

¹² During the Coroner's Inquest – directed by Dr. W.A. Steffen at 4 p.m., November 3, at the Champion funeral home — Dr. S.W. Johnson determined that "The bullet which caused [her] death entered the left shoulder cutting the main artery. Another bullet which struck her in the back would have caused death in time. The third bullet hit her in the front arm below the elbow, and the fourth struck the left arm above the elbow." Witnesses included Vera and June Fulmer of the Toggery Shop; Patrolman E. Wood, and Dr. S.W. Johnson, who performed the procedure. Doctor Steffen added during Geneva's trial that "Two shots had been fired from the front and two from the rear, showing that Mattie Tidwell was doing her best to escape from Geneva Collett, the final and fatal shot caught her just as she was about at the door, where she fell." The coroner's jury – A.J. Ham, H.J. Hewitt, and Chas. J. Johnstone, rendered the following verdict: "... by a gun shot wound, homicide, and not self-inflicted" caused Mattie's death.

¹³ "Genevieve Collett Shot and Killed Mrs. B.F. Tidwell Here"; also "Geneva Collett on Trial for Her life," *Sheridan Journal*, 10 Mar 1927, 1; "Sheridan Has Killing Affair in Which Principals are Both Women"; "Mattie Tidwell Is Victim at Toggery," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 1 Nov 1926, 1; "Inquest Wednesday"; "Murder Charge Faces Girl Here After Inquest," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 4 Nov 1926, 1; "Mrs. Tidwell's Body to Be Sent East for Burial," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 5 Nov 1926, 8; "Story of Tidwell Shooting Retold," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 8 Mar 1927, 1.

¹⁴ "Mattie Tidwell Is Victim at Toggery," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*; also, "Inquest Wednesday." Attorneys involved in the final settlement were the R.E. McNally and John W. Songer, who represented the Colletts, and John F. Raper, the Tidwell's attorney.

¹⁵ "Attorneys for Defense Seek to Show Insanity of Collett Woman by Details of Life in Testimony Presented Tuesday," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 9 Mar 1927, 1.

¹⁶ *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*. *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Coroner's Inquest #283 re Mattie Tidwell, 6th Judicial District Court, Sheridan County, 6 Nov 1926. Dr. S.W. Johnson performed the autopsy on Mattie about 9 p.m.

that night. He described her as "A woman of medium size who was about twenty-four or five years of age. Upon examining the body, I discovered four wounds....Very short time." It was caused when "the left pleural cavity was filled with blood–hemorrhage of the aorta." Policeman Elzie Wood testified at the inquest that, when he learned of the crime, he and a "Mr. Fowler," also with the Police Department, went to the scene. Mattie still was alive when they arrived although "She was just breathing, just a little. There was a lot of foam coming out of her month [sic]. I could see the foam rather move like she was breathing. I saw I couldn't do her any good."

¹⁸ On Sunday, November 7, Shorty accompanied Mattie's body back to her hometown, Cincinnati, Ohio; he and her father, A.M. Smith, buried her there. "Mrs. B.F. Tidwell's Body Sent to Cincinnati, Ohio," *Sheridan Journal*, 11 Nov 1926, 11(1).

¹⁹ Coroner's Inquest #283: "Miss Collett Will Be Held Without Bail," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 22 Nov 1926, 1; Geneva Collett Record, Inmate #13916, Colorado State Penitentiary, Cañon City, on file at the Colorado State Archives, Denver, n.d.

²⁰ The Dietz, Wyoming, home of Geneva's Serbian cellmate, had been the site of a murder the previous March 18, when Veda Gregovich, a 21-year-old waitress, shot to death her estranged husband, a miner called "Big Mike" Gregovich. The incident brought to a head a long series of allegations concerning Mary's "unruly" house. Veda Gregovich and her mother, Mrs. Miklovitch, had been some of Geneva's first visitors. Mr. Miklovitch also recently had been a prisoner there in county jail on a liquor charge. According to the prison's records, Geneva was "5' 8-1/2" tall; Weight: n/a; Complexion: Fair; Color of Eyes: Gray; Color of Hair: Brown; Occupation: Bookkeeper; Marital Status: Single; Religion: Methodist [like her mother].

²¹ Criminal Complaint, *State of Wyoming v. Genevieve [sic] Collett*, Sheridan County Criminal Case File #1708 filed by John W. Songer, Sheridan County Attorney and Prosecutor, Sheridan, 4 Nov 1926, original file at the District Court Clerk's Office in Sheridan.

²² "Genevieve Collett Shot and Killed Mrs. B.F. Tidwell Here"; also "Inquest Wednesday"; "Geneva Collett on Trial for Her Life"; "Events Leading to Murder of Mattie Tidwell"; "Inquest Wednesday."

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Justice of the Peace Interim Ruling by Judge J.F. Hoop, *State of Wyoming v. Genevieve [sic] Corlett*. Her name subsequently was corrected on the Criminal Docket and Information by the court via "Criminal Cause No.

1708." when her case went that December 11 to Judicial Court of the Fourth Judicial District. Sheridan County Criminal Case File #1708.. 22 Nov 1926: also "Miss Collett Enters Plea of Not Guilty," *Sheridan Journal*, 18 Nov 1926, 1(2):

²⁵ "Doctors Examine Geneva Collett To Determine Sanity," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 19 Nov 1926, 1.

²⁶ "Geneva Collett Held to District Court for Trial," *Sheridan Journal*, 25 Nov 1926, 10(2)

²⁷ "Geneva Collett Trial Postponed Two Weeks," *Sheridan Journal*, 17 Feb 1927, 1(6-7); also "Geneva Collett on Trial for Her Life," Judge D.D. Murane from the Hagens and Murane law firm of Casper, and attorney H.C. Crippen of Billings, also were part of the defense team that included William "Will" G. Metz and Carl L. Sackett. The newspaper reporter also claimed that "the attorneys for the defense...did not take this case, until after they had the advice of physicians as to her [Geneva's] mental condition, that it was by no means normal, and that they could expect to prove insanity when the case comes to trial."

²⁸ Deposition of Mrs. Tudor Edwards, 11 Feb 1927, *State of Wyoming v. Geneva [sic] Collett*. Sheridan County Criminal Case File #1708; also, "District Court Convened Monday," *Sheridan Journal*, 16 Dec 1926, 3(1); Notice to Take Depositions. State of Wyoming vs. Geneva Collett. Sheridan County Criminal Case File #1708, n.d.; "Defense Again Uses Expert Testimony To Pile Up Evidence Tending To Slayer Of Young Sheridan Bride Insane," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 11 Mar 1927, 1. During her sworn testimony at the City Hall office of Justice Hoop at 2 p.m., on 11 Feb 1926, Mrs. Edwards said that her shop was located in the Jackson Apartments.

²⁹ *Ibid.* Mrs. Edwards, who came to Sheridan in June 1925, later operated the Rex and Modern Beauty Parlors in the Anderson building and then at Jackson apartments. She later clarified her statement about the money, saying Geneva "didn't tell me about the money; it was Mrs. Hotchkiss."

³⁰ "Geneva Collett Trial Postponed Two Weeks": also Geneva Collett Gets Measles, Trial Delayed," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 17 Feb 1927, 1. Authorities speculated that she may have contracted the disease either from a visitor to the jail or "on one of her trips down town, which she has at times [been] allowed to do in custody with an officer."

³¹ "Collett Murder Trial will Start Monday Morning," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 6 Mar 1927, 1. Ilsley, judge of the 7th District at Sundance, filled in for Judge James H. Burgess, who was holding court in Newcastle.

³² *Ibid.*; also, Colorado State Penitentiary Record for Geneva Collett on file at the Colorado State Archives, Denver, n.d.

³³ "Events Leading to Murder of Mattie Tidwell," *Sheridan Journal*, 10 Mar 1927, 1(7); also, "Geneva Collett, Girl Slayer, Says 'She Double-Crossed Me'"; "Attorneys for Defense Seek to Show Insanity of Collett Woman by Details of Life in Testimony Presented Tuesday," op. cit.: "Effort To Prove Geneva Collett Insane Leaves Woman Slayer Expressionless Through Longs Days in Courtroom Here," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 10 Mar 1927, 1; Colorado State Penitentiary Record for Geneva Collett. Mr. Elgin, a former employer in Casper, said later, that he "never saw Miss Collett angry during the years she worked for him. She was always good natured, efficient, and made friends rapidly." She had an appendectomy on 31 Mar 1925, then came the June 1926 surgery that, medical experts would claim, changed her life . . . and mind.

According to several newspaper accounts ["'Insanity' of Geneva Collett More Noticeable Since Trial Started State Witnesses Say," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 11 Mar 1927, 1]. There also were allegations at Geneva's trial that she had been arrested, charged, and had plead guilty to bootlegging on 31 Dec 1925 in Billings. The author, however, has not been able to substantiate that accusation.

³⁴ "Geneva Collett on Trial for Her Life": also, "Insanity Plea Offered By Defense."

³⁵ "Alienists Testify In Collett Trial"; "Jury Did Ignore Expert Testimony"; Minutes, Wyoming Board of Pardons, Vols. #2, 26 Jul 1928, 265-266; Dr. Courtney Anne Brown [board certified clinical psychiatrist], Louisville, KY, to author. According to Dr. Brown, "Dementia Precox is one of the original terms used to describe schizophrenia. There are different types of schizophrenia. One type is catatonic."

³⁶ "Guilty of Murder in the First Degree Is Decision of the Jury," *Sheridan Journal*, 18 Mar 1927, 1(6-7),12(2). Included in those, who noticed the great difference in Geneva's demeanor, were Mrs. Andrew McNeil of Casper, who had roomed with her while Geneva worked in that city. C. M. Elgin, proprietor of the Elgin Studio, for whom Geneva worked in Casper, also testified, "she was not as mentally efficient now as then." Other witnesses as to her mental health were I. E. Gilbert of Buffalo, and Mrs. Bernice Webber, who roomed with her in that city. Collett's operation was performed at the Sheridan County Memorial Hospital. According to the testimony of at least one of the doctors, the procedure "removed com-

pletely most of her vital organs." In fact, such vivid descriptions so affected one elderly woman at the March 7 hearing that she "fainted while listening to the trial." According to Doctor Stevenson, he said he "felt confident that such an operation might have a serious effect upon the nervous system and mental faculties," although there is no mention as to whether Geneva and her family were so warned in advance of that procedure. Another witness, Dr. F.A. Dolan, corroborated practically all that Doctor Stevenson had said, stating that such an operation "could cause insanity," and that he, too, had noticed considerable change since her operation. "At least five or six doctors and mental experts," according to one article, appeared on the stand and swore "a belief that the defendant was insane, both at time deed was committed" as well as at the time of trial. Nearly the same number of medical experts, however, took the stand and offered conflicting opinions.

³⁷ "Effort To Prove Geneva Collett Insane Leaves Woman Slayer Expressionless Through Longs Days in Courtroom Here": "Several Odd Happenings In Woman's Trial," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 13 Mar 1927, 1. To be more precise, the pillow was "about 18 inches."

³⁸ "Effort To Prove Geneva Collett Insane Leaves Woman Slayer Expressionless Through Longs Days in Courtroom Here."

³⁹ "Collett Trial Opens Here," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 7 Mar 1927, 1; also "Effort to Prove Geneva Collett Insane Leaves Woman Slayer Expressionless Through Longs Days in Courtroom Here": "Collett Murder Case Goes To Jury": "Guilty of Murder in the First Degree Is Decision of the Jury." A ripple of amusement also swept the courtroom when a T. L. Davis, a city fireman, testified that he "had been keeping steady company with the defendant 'as a sweetheart'" that followed his previous testimony that he knew her to be insane at that time. Regarding her "love life," Dr. C. M. Schiek, who examined her, said Geneva told him that she "didn't care" if she got married although she acknowledged that she had "men friends." Then, with a laugh, she said that she didn't care for women as friends because "you can't trust" them."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: also "Guilty of Murder in the First Degree Is Decision of the Jury": Journal Entry and Verdict of the Jury, *State of Wyoming v. Geneva Collett*, Sheridan County Criminal Case File #1708, n.d. The jurors were: Fred Welter, Henry C. Wales, John Johnson, James D. Reynolds, C.M. Bayless, J.E. Reisenweaver, and H. E. Zullig, all of Sheridan; and Frank B. Lotspeich and W. H. Strayer, both of Kleenburn; George Williams, Ucross; Alonzo R. Shreve, Wolf; and J.T. Kessinger, Acme.

³¹ "Geneva Collett on Trial for Her life,"

⁴¹ "Guilty of Murder in the First Degree Is Decision of the Jury"; also "Woman Sentenced to Life in Prison," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 14 Mar 1927, 1; "Geneva Collett Murder Trial Cost \$3,504.86," *Wyoming Eagle*, Cheyenne, 22 Apr 1927, 10(1); *State of Wyoming v. Geneva Collett*, Sheridan County Criminal Case File #1708, n.d. Neither her mother nor any relative was with Geneva either at the time of the verdict or at her sentencing. The only relative representing Mattie was Hartley Tidwell, her brother-in-law. Her husband and child did not return for the trial, nor did her father attend. The principal expenses for her trial involved the jury, amounting to \$1,100. Additional approximate costs were for counsel (\$1,000), witnesses (\$900), and miscellaneous expenses. (\$500)

⁴² Not only was Geneva the "first woman to be given a life term in Wyoming," but "the state has never condemned a woman to death." "Sheridan Woman First to be Given Sentence of Life," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 14 Mar 1927, 1. Also, according to records of the State Board of Charities and Reform, at the time of "Geneva's sentence, only "36 women have been given penitentiary terms since Wyoming became a state while 3,850 men have been sent to the state's penal institution." The correct number, however, was 55 women sentenced. Geneva was the 36th woman prisoner to be sent out of state.

⁴³ "I'm Taking My Medicine Now," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 16 Mar 1927, 1. She also said that "I'm still very tired and worn out from the long trial ... No, I didn't read the papers during my trial ... to read some papers with their sensational crime news will drive one 'nuts' anyway," she added. As the reporter, on leaving, closed the heavy iron door of her cell, she bade him goodbye and said, "Well, I may see you again as long as I am here, there is still a chance."

⁴⁴ Miss Collett Sent to Colorado Pen," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 17 Mar 1927, 1. Before being driven away, Geneva thanked each member of the sheriff's staff for the way they had treated her during her four-and-a-half months in jail.

⁴⁵ "Guilty of Murder in the First Degree Is Decision of the Jury"; also *State of Wyoming v. Geneva Collett*, Sheridan County Criminal Case File #1708.

⁴⁶ "Prison Gates Clank On Pretty Woman Life Termer Who Sighs Because Birds Aren't Chirping," *Cañon City Daily*, 19 Mar 1927; also Geneva Collett Records, Inmate #13916, Colorado State Penitentiary. Before leaving the hotel, her last act was to send the following telegram to her mother: "We arrived here at nine forty-five last night. We are going out this morning. Goodbye, with love Geneva."

⁴⁷ Geneva Collett Records, Inmate

#13916, Colorado State Penitentiary.

⁴⁸ "Woman Recalls Events During Prison Career," *Post-Advocate*, San Gabriel, Calif., 1956; also "Search Topic was Mary Fitzgerald - Supt. at women's Prison at Cañon City, CO" researched by Lucile Sanger, on file at the Local History Center, Cañon City Library, Cañon City, January, 1993. The original building was a stone structure 48' by 109' and was a two-stories high. There was a basement that measured 18' by 30'. This facility, built in 1908-1909, had 40 cells along the outer walls of the second floor. The hallway between the two rows of cells was called the "Rec. Corridor" - an area for exercise. The first floor of this building had a reception room and the few necessary hospital rooms, bath and toilet. The basement contained an 18' by 30' dining room, kitchen, laundry, furnace and storage. Heat was provided by a hot water system. In the 1920s, inmates and staff had a radio and a phonograph in the "Red Corridor." During the 3 Oct 1929 riot - the worst in the prison's history - "Mrs. Fitzgerald was held hostage for 29 hours without lights or phone." Near the time of the riot, there were 25 women inmates. They wore the traditional blue and white uniforms. No educational or recreational activities were offered the women. They did some sewing and craft things. Mary [the matron] worked 12-hour shifts and was relieved at night by a G.S. Campbell.

⁴⁹ *Ibid* After adjusting to her new life, the authorities let her - like other inmates - "furnish her cell as comfortably as the hotel room she left" that morning.

⁵⁰ "Collett Case Is Carried to Higher Court," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 17 Mar 1927, 1.

⁵¹ "Prison Gates Clank On Pretty Woman Life Termer Who Sighs Because Birds Aren't Chirping."

⁵² "Collett Case Is Carried to Higher Court"; also, "Mrs. G.S. Loubet Now In Cañon City Trying to Get Geneva Out of Prison," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 25 Mar 1927, 1; Minutes, Wyoming Board of Pardons, Vols #2, (microfilm), 11 Jul 1928, 261,271-272, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne. Mrs. Loubet, who claimed to be a "sister of Geneva's father," seems to have been a fraud as well as a mystery, because nothing further has been learned of her and her motives. She repeatedly went to the Board of Pardons on Geneva's behalf and visited the murderer in the penitentiary at Cañon City. According to the minutes of the State Board of Pardons, the secretary "read to the board a letter from the Warden of the Colorado State Penitentiary with reference to the illness of Geneva Collett and the cost of treatment. He stated that Geneva had a peculiar skin trouble, treatment for which is too ex-

pensive to be covered by the sum paid by the State of Wyoming for care of prisoners. Motion carried, if nothing appears in the contract to the contrary, the state [Wyoming] pay for the medical care."

⁵³ "Girl Slayer Waits Action Of Court Here," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 13 Apr 1927, 1; also, Minutes, Wyoming Board of Pardons, Vols. #2, 26 Jul 1928, 265-266,316; 30 Feb 1930, 376; 10 Mar 1930, 390-391. Mrs. Collett and her brother-in-law, a "Mr. Cook," appeared before the Board of Pardons and asked that Geneva's sentence be "commuted to five years and that she be moved to some institution in Wyoming. The mother reported that Geneva's health is not good and that she is much dissatisfied. Mr. Cook asked if it would be possible to have her transferred to Evanston." Even Sheridan County Sheriff Lord recommended that "some change should be made for this girl as present conditions in Cañon City are not good." The Board, however, recommended no clemency. Defense attorney Will Metz went to the penitentiary in Cañon City "for the purpose of investigating her condition. Dr. Holmes, the prison physician, says the medical bills for her have been more than for the entire institution." Other medical experts, including a psychiatrist, urged the Board of Pardons to have her transferred to a hospital that not only specialized in mental problems, but could treat Geneva's physical ailments as well. They, too, proved unsuccessful in having Geneva's circumstances changed. Geneva herself wrote several times to Governor Emerson, asking him to grant her clemency.

⁵⁴ Minutes, Board of Charities & Reform, Cheyenne, 3 Feb 1930, 376.

⁵⁵ Minutes, Board of Pardons, Vols. #2, 26 Jul 1928, 265-266.

⁵⁶ Minutes, Board of Pardons, Vols. #2, 10 Mar 1930, 390-391. Although the matron in charge of the woman's facilities in Lansing - Miss Amy G. Abbott - originally said she "could not take Wyoming prisoners," she subsequently went to her Governor, C. M. Reed, who arranged for the agreement to be approved.

⁵⁷ Mike Neve, Classification Administrator, Kansas State Industrial Farm, Lansing, KS, to author, 8 Dec 1997; also, "Claimed She Was Improved," *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 6 Oct 1930, 1. "For a number of years the state of Wyoming has been keeping its women prisoners at the penitentiary here and [of 30 women inmates, including Colorado women plus a few federal convicts] four or five of them are now imprisoned here." "Wyoming Women Convicts to be Sent to Kansas," *Cañon City Daily Record*, Cañon City, 25 Apr 1930.

Despite continued efforts in her behalf, Geneva wrote the following on 15 Septem-

ber 1930 to Miss Abbot, her matron: "Sorry friends speaking in my behalf have exaggerated my physical condition. I feel much better here than I did in Colorado. I believe that I am stronger from the standpoint of having a better view of life than when I came here. I am really studying my real self and am trying to get adjusted in such a way that I may be an asset to the state to which I may go."

⁵⁸ "Geneva Collett Is Found Dead In Bed At Kansas Prison Farm." *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 6 Oct 1930, 1(1); also, "Geneva Collett. Murderer of Mrs. Mattie Tidwell, Dead at Kansas State Industrial Farm." *Sheridan Journal*, 7 Oct 1930, 1(7-8). Her sister Pearl, who had visited her just three weeks prior to her death, said "she was in critical condition at that time."

⁵⁹ "Heart Attack Proves Fatal After Illness." *Sheridan Post-Enterprise*, 6 Oct 1930, 1(1); also, "Geneva Collett. Murderer of Mrs. Mattie Tidwell, Dead at Kansas State Indus-

trial Farm." *Sheridan Journal*, 7 Oct 1930, 1(7-8); Minutes, Board of Pardons, Vols. #2, 1 [or 4?] Dec 1930, 491; Geneva Collett, Certificate of Death; Ray Adames, Sweetwater, Texas, to author, 26 Jun 2001. At the request of the Collett family, the State Board of Pardons agreed to reimburse the family

\$60 for Geneva's burial expenses. That was the amount the it would cost the State of Wyoming to bury a male prisoner at its penitentiary in Rawlins. According to Mr. Adames, who is responsible for the City Cemetery records in Sweetwater, Geneva is buried there in Block 39, Lot 10.

*Larry Brown is author of six books and numerous articles. He also has written short stories published in prestigious magazines. Wyoming Writers, Inc., honored his *Hog Ranches of Wyoming: Liquor, Lust and Lies Under Sagebrush Skies*, with a "Western Horizon" Award. The Old Pen Joint Powers Board in Rawlins published his *Petticoat Prisoners of the Wyoming Frontier Prison* (1995). Petticoat Prisoners of Old Wyoming, published by High Plains Press in 2001, received the Wyoming State Historical Society "Publications" award last year. Brown has been a frequent contributor to Annals.*

Book Reviews

Significant Recent Books on Western and Wyoming History

Edited by Carl Hallberg

Playing Indian. By Philip J. Deloria. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. 264 pp. Illus., notes, index. Cloth, \$30; paper, \$13.95.

Reviewed by Matthew Dennis, University of Oregon

For more than two hundred years, even before Crèvecoeur asked his famous question – "What, then, is the American, this new man?" – white Americans have struggled with an identity problem, and their imaginative solutions have often involved "playing Indian." Philip J. Deloria's *Playing Indian* brilliantly limns the complicated process in which non-Indians imagined themselves as Indians, claimed Indian identities, and acted out their fantasies in their efforts to define and redefine themselves as Americans. *Playing Indian* is sophisticated, theoretically-informed cultural history, yet throughout it remains engaging, accessible, and compelling, free of jargon and inviting to general readers. A rare achievement, *Playing Indian* changes the way we see American culture.

Deloria's chronological range is astonishing, as he moves from the Boston Tea Party's Mohawk masquerade to the postmodern rites and festivals of late 20th century's counterculture and New Age. Throughout this tour, the analysis is perceptive, fair, and respectful as Deloria reconstructs the experiences, thoughts, and expressions of historical actors, not to ridicule or dismiss them but rather to make their (often strange) behavior comprehensive and to explain white America's love-hate relationship with North America's native people. Nonetheless, the author pulls no punches in analyzing the impact and failures of non-Indians appropriation of Indian-ness. Though his focus is primarily on non-Indian imaginers, he offers significant insights as well on the historical experience of real Indian people and their own struggle to endure and sometimes even use white Indian play for their own empowerment. This is no mere clever textual or disembodied investigation; unlike some works in cultural studies, *Playing Indian*'s arguments are expertly placed in the context of American social, economic and political history.

During the American Revolution, Americans masked themselves as Indians to assert physically and metaphorically their new, non-British identity, which they grounded in the North American landscape associated with native people. After the Revolution's success, patriotic and fraternal organizations – like the Tammany Society, in the days before it became a political machine in New York City – dressed up like Indians to dissociate themselves from Britain and to lay claim to a unique, indigenous status in America. As the heirs of Tammany, or other mythic Indians, these men and others could believe themselves entitled to possess not merely a new American identity but title to the land itself supposedly abandoned by the "vanishing" American Indian. Yet, as white Americans pushed westward and encountered real Indians – who have never vanished – and engaged them with violence, imaginative association with Indians became more problematic.

By the late 19th century, modernity made this early American world seemed distant, while the changes (and problems) associated with population expan-

sion, urbanization, massive immigration, and industrial capitalism were both proximate and daunting. Indians again served as models for anxious white elites who hoped to restore a sense of authenticity and vitality to American life, to cultivate manliness among men and natural feminine qualities to women, particularly in programs designed for children, like the Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and various summer camps. Following World War II, Indian play addressed anxieties about personal identity and meaning in an age often characterized by mass conformity. In more recent times, non-Indians appropriated Indian identities to cope with their fragmented, "postmodern" condition. Deloria's story ends in the multicultural present, as Americans continue to act out their Indian fantasies into the 21st century, sometimes harmlessly, sometimes not, but as always filled with contradictions and ironies.

The above summary cannot do justice to Deloria's important book, a bright illumination about the history of white America's understating of Indians and of itself. *Playing Indian* is an essential text in American cultural history.

The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West. By Michael L. Tate. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999. 416 pp. Illus., maps, notes, bib., index. Cloth, \$34.95.

Reviewed by Malcolm E. Taylor, Albuquerque, NM

Michael L. Tate's *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West* is an exceptional book for its genre. Each of the twelve chapters contains the seeds of one or more full-length books. That is both its strength and a source of frustration. Tate has managed to provide just enough information to pique the reader's interest but not enough to sate it. In this, he has accomplished two of his stated goals: to write a book that "provides the necessary synthesis to tie together the diverse topics [found in the various chapters] into an understandable whole" and "to suggest to other researchers how much still needs to be done with the individual

dimensions of the army's role." One can only accept his word that he has accomplished his third goal – to give the reader "the most complete bibliography yet assembled on the multipurpose army concept."

Whether or not his bibliography is the most complete yet assembled on the topic, *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West* is well written and thoroughly enjoyable to read. Tate makes extensive use of primary and secondary sources to show that two common stereotypes regarding the frontier army are essentially false. The soldiers who made up that army were neither the glamorous and dashing heroes portrayed in the paintings of Frederick Remington and the movies of John Ford, nor the blood thirsty racists portrayed in Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves* (1990). Rather, the frontier army was, in Tate's words, a "multi-purpose army." It was made up of explorers, road builders, and men who improved the nation's river transportation. Many officers and enlisted men collected scientific data, which they shared with eastern scholars. A number were artists, and more than a few were writers. Their works published in newspapers and magazines did much to popularize and romanticize frontier life. Tate also makes it clear that the army played a significant role in the expansion of rail, telegraph, and postal service to the western United States, and was responsible for the establishment of the weather service. He also points out that civilian communities frequently grew up around the army's frontier outposts. When this happened, civilian communities profited from the army payroll and with their access to schools, libraries, chapels, and hospitals that the army provided for the welfare of its troops.

This book, in all likelihood, will be relegated to the reference section of college and university libraries. There, it will not be available to secondary school students who, if they read it, would find the stimulus to scholarship that Tate is hoping his fellow professors will find. *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West* belongs in classroom reference sets of every United States history advanced placement class.

Crossing the Pond: The Native American Effort in World War II. By Jere' Bishop Franco. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1999. 296 pp. Illus., notes, bib., index. Paper, \$29.95.

Reviewed by John W. Heaton, Utah State University

Jere' Bishop Franco's *Crossing the Pond* is volume seven in the University of North Texas Press's War and the Southwest Series. This collection examines the actions of southwest veterans around the world as well as military life in the region itself and spans the contact period between Europeans and Native Americans to the present. As such, Franco's book seems an odd fit. The author's narrative ranges well beyond the experiences of southwestern Indians. *Crossing the Pond* also explores wartime contributions of Indians from New York, Canada, Alaska, and other North American locations.

According to Franco, American Indians took the notion of serving their country seriously during World War II and contributed to the war effort in a variety of ways. When the war ended, they returned to their reservations and expected to "participate in 'a better America' as the 'First Americans'" (p. ix). These patriotic Indians, the author asserts, served not only as role models for their peoples but for all Americans.

This book is a response to Sherry Smith's challenge in a *Western Historical Quarterly* article to focus on "relationships between ethnic groups, the military, and the government" (p. xv). Using government documents and manuscript interviews, the author has crafted a narrative detailing many aspects of Indian contributions to the war effort. Chapter one tells the story of Nazi Germany's attempt to use Indians to subvert the Roosevelt administration during the 1930s by supporting the efforts of Indian critics, such as Alice Lee Jemison, of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Nazi's overestimated their success in winning Indian allies and their failed efforts demonstrated that most Indians remained loyal to the United States. In chapter two, Franco considers the re-

sponse of Indians to Uncle Sam's call to arms. Although many individuals and tribal groups did not want to enlist, Indians as a whole committed to the war effort by volunteering in relatively high numbers. Moreover, despite early bureaucratic confusion over jurisdiction and status, government officials were pleased with the one hundred percent Indian registration rate for the draft. The war provided new opportunities for chronically underemployed reservation Indians who were not eligible for the draft. The third chapter reveals that although full tribal employment brought obvious benefits, it ultimately threatened Indian status when post-war critics of federal Indian policy used Indian war contributions as proof that Indians could and would assimilate. Chapter four proves the level of tribal economic support for the war effort. Many tribal groups purchased war bonds and allowed the government to lease and develop crucial natural resources on reservation lands. In chapter six, the author discusses the largely unknown use of Indians in government propaganda to build popular support for the war. While the government portrayed Indians in a positive light, Indians did not control the new media image being created of patriotic, but still exotic, Indians. The only chapter to consider the overseas duty of Indians during the war, chapter seven, focuses not on combat but on the experiences unique to Indian servicemen as they attempted to deal with loneliness and culture shock in distant lands. The Santa Fe Indian Club, originally an Indian school social club, evolved into an institution for Indian servicemen from New Mexico, providing a news forum and message board to help Indian soldiers stay in touch with friends, relatives, and news about other Indian soldiers from their state. Chapter eight examines the positive impact of World War II service on Indian activism and self-determination. In her afterword, Franco argues that the government rewarded Indian patriotism with termination and relocation. As a result, Indian rejection of mainstream culture helped create a revitalization movement in the 1960s and 1970s known as Red Power.

This solidly researched study provides

a good overview of the World War II era of American Indian history. Although the book's title infers a study of Indian military service during the war, students of American military history will be disappointed in the focus. However, those interested in the World War II home front, Indian history, or the civil rights movement will find much to admire in this work.

days." While some recall unusual wrecks, blizzards or an encounter with a traveling movie star, their common theme is the satisfaction derived from overcoming the daily challenge of getting trains over the hill. Railroads were then and remain vital to the well-being of the nation, although this fact is not generally appreciated today. These folks knew their jobs were important.

Several individuals vividly remember the notorious blizzard of 1949. Others mention C. J. Colombo, an official tough enough to have bossed the Wyoming Division longer than any other superintendent, yet known for his fairness, his willingness to work alongside his men, and even for his occasional sense of humor. In spite of hard work, long hours, danger, intermittent layoffs, and ornery officials, these railroaders reflect pride in their work and loyalty to the company. There is a lesson here that could benefit modern corporate managers.

Although a chapter is devoted to wives who had their own special challenge in raising a family during a life of frequent moves and extended periods of "single parenting," one wishes that the author had been able to interview some women railroaders. There have been many over the years, especially during World War II. Today female engineers, while not numerous, are by no means uncommon.

More than 50 excellent photographs evoke the drama of railroading over Sherman Hill, perhaps the most famous locale on Union Pacific's transcontinental mainline. One of an engineer high in the cab of a "Big Boy" steam locomotive, ready for another battle with the grades over Sherman Hill, personifies a memory for many of us who grew up before 1960. The view on page 43 captures the ferocity of a Wyoming blizzard better than any other this reviewer has seen. Several images were taken by eminent rail historian and photographer Jim Ehrenberger of Cheyenne, himself a retired 35-year Union Pacific veteran.

There is a little bit of a railfan in everyone. Bess Arnold's book helps one understand why this is true.

Union Pacific: Crossing Sherman Hill and Other Railroad Stories.

By Bess Arnold. David City, Nebr.: South Platte Press, 1999. 81 pp. Illus., bib.. Paper, \$19.95.

Reviewed by Charles Albi, Executive Director, Colorado Railroad Museum

Books about railroads tend to fall into two categories. Some are academic business histories written by professional historians. Many others are published for rail enthusiasts and are filled with photographs and technical data about locomotives and cars. *Union Pacific: Crossing Sherman Hill and Other Railroad Stories* addresses a previously neglected topic, recording the first hand accounts of those who have spent their working lives as railroaders. An introduction by Union Pacific Manager of Train Operating Practices Stephen A. Lee provides an historical perspective for this fine collection of reminiscences.

The author, a freelance writer who graduated from the University of Wyoming after a career with the Wyoming Education Association, has interviewed 27 Union Pacific railroaders whose collective experience spans the period from 1917 to the present. Their jobs range from locomotive engineer to club car steward, from section hand to division superintendent. Today, when a person must anticipate working for several employers during a lifetime, it is remarkable that this group averaged 40 years each and one 55 years before retirement.

Their accounts are presented in a straightforward manner and avoid the unnecessary embellishments that often characterize memories of the "good old

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Wyoming Picture

From Photographic Collections
in Wyoming



Thermopolis Nursery School, "Kid's Lunch," 1936

This photograph, made by an unknown Works Progress Administration photographer on April 16, 1936, shows three women, apparently teachers, posed with nearly 20 nursery school students at lunch time in their school. Statewide, Wyomingites were suffering from a severe economic depression and drought. These difficulties seem to be apparent just from the expressions on the faces of children and teachers (none identified on the photograph) as well as from their clothing. The photograph is held in the WPA Photographs collection, Wyoming State Archives, Division of Cultural Resources, Cheyenne.

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Annals of **WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal
Spring 2002 Vol. 74, No. 2



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* Target Practice and Firing Ranges at Fort Fred Steele

The Cover Art

“Fort Fred Steele”

a painting

by Phillip Denis De Trobriand

The cover painting of Fort Fred Steele was made in the 1870s by Phillip Denis De Trobriand. He was a Frenchmen of noble birth who had been educated at the College of Tours and awarded a law degree from Poitiers. He toured the United States in 1841, married an American woman, then returned to France for several years. In 1847, he came back to this country to live permanently. During the Civil War, taken with “a cause that had immortalized Lafayette,” he became a citizen of the United States and assumed command of a group of Union Army volunteers as a general. He was assigned to duty in Dakota, Montana, Utah and Wyoming in the course of his military career. A diarist, poet, and novelist, De Trobriand was also a gifted amateur painter. Everywhere in his travels he saw subjects for pictures--his sketches and paintings include works on Indians, landscapes, and Western military structures. Both in his journals and his art works, he revealed a remarkable perceptiveness of the world around him. He was sensitive to people he encountered and to the environment in which he found them. De Trobriand’s literary and artistic endeavors serve not only as aesthetic expressions of life in the American West more than a century ago, but as valuable historical documents that provide a realistic, accurate picture of that lifestyle. The cover painting and a companion piece were purchased many years ago by the Wyoming State Art Gallery with funds contributed by members of the Wyoming State Historical Society. The original painting is housed in the collections of the State Museum, State Parks and Cultural Resources Department, Cheyenne.

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the “Wyoming Memories” section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in “Wyoming Memories” also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal’s Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071, or to the editor by e-mail at the following address: philr@uwyo.edu

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Annals of WYOMING

The Wyoming History Journal
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A Tale of Two Sisters: Pryor & Trischman in Yellowstone in the Best and Worst and Times

By Robert V. Goss 2

Two sisters operated a pioneering concession in Yellowstone National Park. Their story is filled with triumph and tragedy, including the suicide of their mother and the murder of their brother. They weathered adversity and finally sold the operations and retired. Their story describes the "ups and downs" of concessions in the Park.

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Glover, a Philadelphia photographer, came West in the middle 1860s where he was killed by Indians near Fort Phil Kearny. Did he make photographs in the area? Fleming reveals long-lost examples of Glover's work and postulates that other of his photographs may be out there somewhere.

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By Mark D. Hanson 24

Soldiers during the frontier period were required to practice marksmanship. Hanson reveals the possible locations of firing ranges at one of Wyoming's frontier military posts, Fort Fred Steele. He argues that target practice on the frontier required similar materials and facilities as practice elsewhere in the 19th century military.

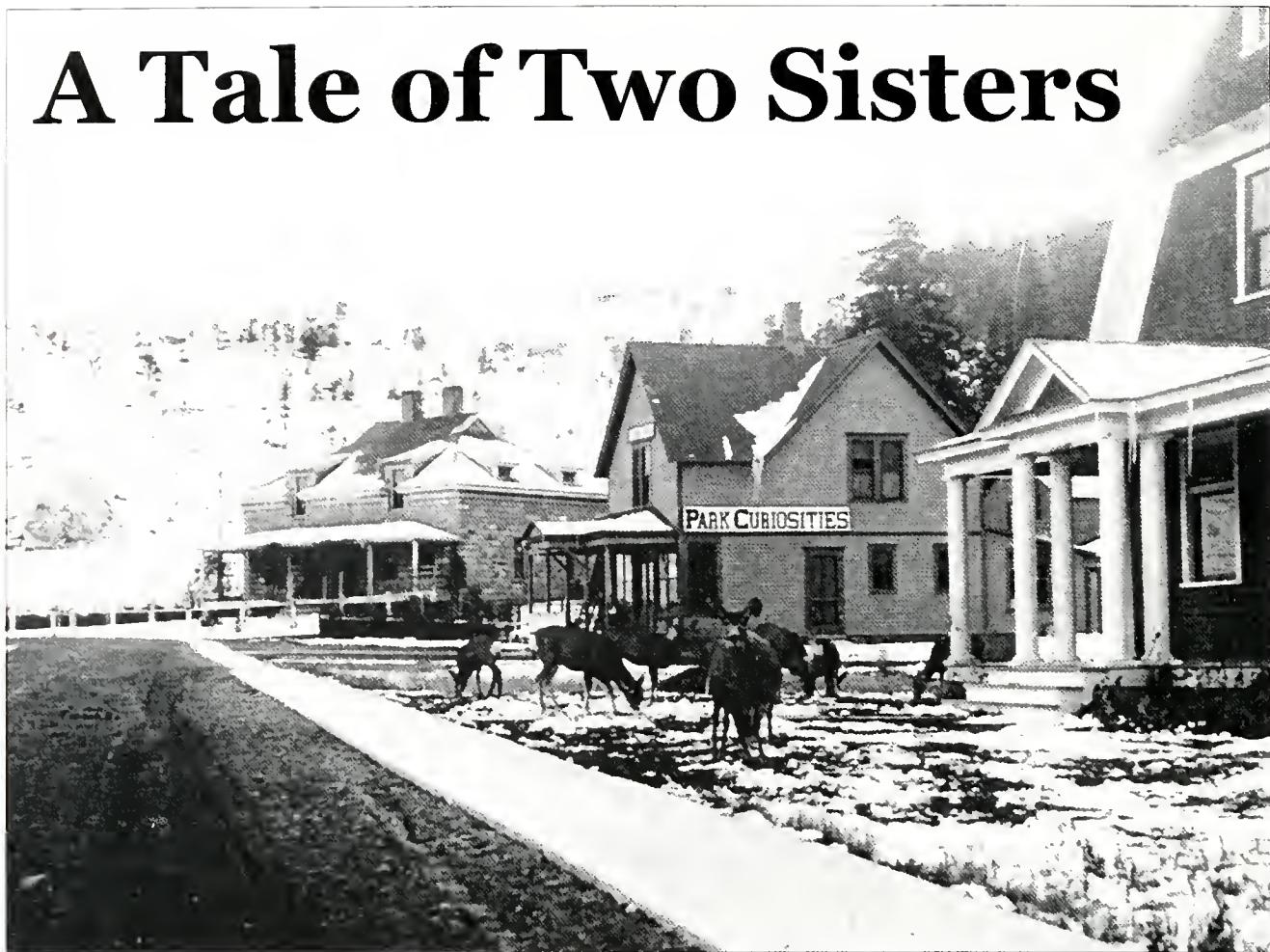
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A Tale of Two Sisters



Speciman House, c. 1900. NPS Yellowstone collection

Pryor & Trischman in Yellowstone in the Best and Worst of Times

By
Robert V. Goss

The story of the Park Curio Shop at Mammoth Hot Springs and the related businesses of Pryor & Trischman seem to be a neglected tale in the annals of Yellowstone's concession history. They ran a successful business for 45 years, and in the last 20 years of their operation controlled essentially all the general merchandise sales in the northern portion of the park. They also shared in the operation of the park service stations with park businessmen Harry Child and Charles Hamilton. The roots of their business stem from many of the early pioneers in the park concessions operations, including Ole Anderson, George Whittaker, Alexander Lyall, Walter Henderson and Jennie Ash.

Anna Katheryn and Elizabeth "Belle" Trischman were daughters of George Trischman who came to work at Fort Yellowstone in 1899 as post carpenter. Both teenagers at the time, it did not take very many years before they began to make their mark in the predominately male-dominated business scene in the park.

In the early 1900's Anna married George R. Pryor and together they purchased the interests of Ole Anderson's Specimen House in 1908. Elizabeth became a partner with Anna in 1912 and the business continued to expand and prosper. In 1932, the sisters bought out the stores and gas stations of George Whittaker that were located at Mammoth and Canyon, giving themselves a monopoly in the northern part of the park. The store they purchased at Mammoth was the current Hamilton's Store.

Yellowstone National Park was created March 1, 1872. Along with other provisions, the act stipulated that the Secretary of the Interior "...may in his discretion, grant leases for building purposes...of small pieces of ground...for the accommodation of visitors."¹ This authority allowed the Secretary to permit the establishment of various businesses to serve the visitors to the park. The sheer size of the park, at 2.2 million acres, and its distance from major population centers, made it necessary for the creation of transportation, lodging, and general merchandise systems in order for the tourist to enjoy his visit.

The early years of the park were ones of experimentation and change. As Yellowstone was the first National Park established, the government had no experience in operating one. Nathaniel Langford was selected as the first Superintendent, but Congress did not allocate any funds for the management of the park until 1878. Langford held the unpaid position until 1877, but spent very little time actually in the park. Philetus Norris took over the position until 1882 and set about building crude roads with the initial appropriations from Congress. He established rules and regulation for the park, but he had no actual authority to enforce the rules and had little help to patrol the vast wilderness. Three more superintendents were assigned during the next four years, but none accomplished significant safekeeping measures for the park.² Poaching was rampant, careless campers caused forest fires, and natural features were chiseled away by visitors desiring 'souvenirs' from the park. Ruth-

less businessmen connived to control all concessions for their personal profit.

To save the park from destruction, Congress passed a Sundry Civil Bill in March of 1883 that, among others things, gave the Secretary of War, upon the request of the Secretary of Interior, the authority to station troops in the park in order to enforce the laws and provide protection for the park.³ On Aug. 20, 1886, the 1st Cavalry, under Capt. Moses Harris, assumed control of the park. The Army would be in charge of the park until 1918, when the newly formed National Park Service took over administration of the park. Among the many new duties for the Army was the responsibility for managing the concession operations that had been formed, and reviewing the applications for new businesses that wished to operate in the park. Ultimate approval rested with the Secretary of Interior, but he depended on recommendations of the Army's Acting Superintendents at Fort Yellowstone.

By the time the army took over, two hotels had been established at Mammoth. Primitive hotels, or tent hotels, existed at other major locations, and a variety of transportation companies were traversing the crude roads in Yellowstone. Frank Haynes had established his photo business at Mammoth and the Upper Geyser Basin, and a few other small businesses were in operation selling curios and some general goods.

One of these early businessmen was Ole Anderson, whose business eventually ended up in the hands of Anna Pryor and Elizabeth Trischman. Ole Anderson's father was the winterkeeper at the Canyon Hotel for at least the 1888-89 seasons.⁴ Ole opened a tent store at Mammoth in order to sell "coated specimens" and bottles of colored sand from the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. "Coat-

¹ President Grant signed Senate Bill S.392 creating Yellowstone National Park. The Act specified that the area be "...set apart as a public park or pleasureing-ground (sic) for the benefit and enjoyment of the people... That said public park shall be under the exclusive control of the Secretary of Interior, whose duty shall be...to make and publish such rules and regulations as...necessary or proper for the care and management of the same... [and] shall provide for the preservation...of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, or wonders within said park..." Aubrey L. Haines. *The Yellowstone Story*. II. (Niwot: Colorado Associated Univ. Press, 1977), 471.

² Robert V. Goss, *Yellowstone – The Chronology of Wonderland*. (Yellowstone, 2000), 25-27.

³ Haines, 472.

⁴ Newell F. Joyner, "History of Improvements in Yellowstone National Park." (USNPS, 1929). File No. 11011-02. Structures. Vertical Files, YNP Archives.



Specimen rack, c. 1908 (above). Ole Anderson and "specimen rack," 1895 (left).

YNP collection

ing specimens" was a popular tourist pastime at the Mammoth Terraces. The great volume of dissolved minerals in the water that gushed from the various formations was capable of building up fast on foreign objects placed into the waters. Tourists would take a variety of common objects, such as bottles, pine cones, combs, and horseshoes, let the waters run over them for a period of days and then they would have their momentos covered with glistening white minerals. However, some tourists were destructive of the terrace formations and the Army issued Anderson a permit in 1889 to conduct a business coating specimens for the tourists, hoping that his enterprise would satisfy the visitors needs.⁵

The permit issued in 1889 seems to be the first legal contract Anderson had with the Army, although he had been operating his tent store there since 1883. He was charged a yearly fee of \$20 and allowed to sell "curiosities", but not general wares.⁶ The year 1883 was a good time to start a business at Mammoth as the new National Hotel was just opening, and the Northern Pacific Railroad had just completed its Park Branch Line to Cinnabar, only eight miles away. Visitors now had an easy way to get to Yellowstone, and visitation increased five-fold that year.⁷

In 1894 Anderson wrote requesting permission to build a permanent structure. He stated that "a neat cottage would look much better to the public" [than tents] and that he "would like sufficient ground in front to be able to plant a flower garden to beautify the store."⁸ His request was approved the next year, and construction began on the Specimen House. The new building was ready for business in 1896 and the government issued a 10-year lease to him in April. He seemed to have done well, as in 1906, his lease was renewed for 10 more years, allowing him to also sell the newly popular "picture postcards". The cost of the lease, however, increased to \$50 per year.⁹

By 1908 Ole had been in business for 25 years and was ready to retire. He began negotiations with George and Anna Pryor for the sale of his operation. George wrote a letter to the Acting Superintendent on April 10 requesting permission to in-

⁵ Capt. Anderson to John W. Noble, March 9, 1891, Army Files Doc. 412, YNP Archives.

⁶ Ole Anderson operated his tent store as early as 1883, as indicated in his letter of 1894 to the Secretary of Interior requesting that he be allowed to erect a permanent building to replace his tents. He stated that he had been doing business and living in the tents for 11 years. Acting Superintendent Capt. Anderson wrote to the Secretary in 1891, passing on a request from Ole to build a permanent store and stating: "I have known him for over eight years and can speak from personal knowledge of his good conduct and trustworthy character." Capt. Anderson to Noble, W. W. Wylie and O. Anderson File, Box C-17, "Concessioners 1879-1916," YNP Archives

⁷ Anderson to Noble.

⁸ Ole Anderson to Secretary of Interior, Army Files Doc. 1828, YNP Archives.

⁹ Wylie/Anderson File.

stall a complete soda fountain, which would include ice cream, hot and cold drinks, and a bakery. He felt that since there was no other similar facility in the park, the business would "add materially to the comfort of everyone engaged in or visiting the park."¹⁰ The Interior approved his request on May 12, but by that time Anderson has already signed an Assignment of Lease to the Pryors. Anna and George did not sign the official lease agreement with the government until August 26, but it was retroactive to April 3. The new Pryor lease was for eight years.¹¹

The lease required a fee of \$50 per year, a usage tax of \$115, and covered a plat of ground 13,880 square feet, located immediately north of the U.S. Commissioner's residence. They were allowed use of the building(s) as a dwelling and a store in "which to keep coated specimens, bottled sand, post cards, spoons, and other wares and curiosities." They were also permitted to install and conduct a complete soda fountain with ice cream, coffee, tea, non-alcoholic drinks, and a bakery to supply cakes, pastry, viands, and bread. A stipulation in the lease entitled them to take such timber and other materials from the park to maintain, repair and upgrade their facilities, as long as the materials were from areas specifically designated by the Interior. An accounting of all such materials had to be presented to the authorities on a semi-annual basis.¹² The Pryors named their enterprise the Park Curio & Coffee Shop.¹³

After two seasons of business, the Pryors must have been confident in their success, as in November they asked the Interior to double the size of their store. The Secretary approved blueprints for the project on November 17, but construction had already started by that time, no doubt in order to get a headstart before the onset of winter. The blueprints showed a 2-story addition on the left side of the building with the first floor featuring a living room, kitchen dining room, front porch, and staircase to the upper floor. The upstairs included a bathroom and five bedrooms spreading out over both portions of the building. A sitting alcove was located in the center facing the front of the building and included a balcony on the outside. The store itself occupied the first floor of the original structure.¹⁴

Surviving business letterhead refers to the business as "The Park Curio Shop", with A. K. Pryor as Manager. The letterhead also indicates they were selling Indian moccasins, Navajo goods, Mexican

serapes (serapes) and blankets, fur rugs, and burnt leather novelties. They also advertised "Magnesia Coated Souvenirs from the Mammoth Hot Springs" and "Bottled Variegated Sands from the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone."

In addition to the business responsibilities, Anna, age 24, gave birth to her first child on April 18, 1908, in Helena, Montana. The daughter was named Georgann Pryor,¹⁵ and would, in future years, help her mother and aunt in the operation of the stores. Raising an infant and managing a business must have been quite a challenge, and no doubt Anna's sister Elizabeth played a large part in helping out with the store and Georgann's rearing. Sometime in the next few years Anna had a second daughter named Margaret. However, it appears that relations between George and Anna must have soured at least by 1912. On October 19 of that year George assigned all of his "rights, privileges, and franchise" of the Park Curio Store lease to Elizabeth. Apparently, Elizabeth had already been an active participant in the operation of the store. The business legally became the partnership of Pryor & Trischman, with appropriate lease documents noting the change in ownership.¹⁶

George probably had been planning his exit from the business for a while. In early September he submitted a letter of application to Acting Supt. Col. Brett requesting permission to operate a dairy herd at Mammoth to supply milk and cream to the military and civilian reservations. He chose a location described as on the bench lands about one mile southwest of Mammoth Hot Springs, "sufficiently remote and so located that it cannot be seen from any point around the reservation." He proposed the construction of buildings and fences as required for the operation, and quoted prices of 10¢ a quart, and cream at 40¢ per quart. These prices were to be competitive with those at Livingston, Billings,

¹⁰ George Pryor to Maj. H. L. Allen, Army Files Doc. 7888, YNP Archives

¹¹ Wylie/Anderson File.

¹² Pryor & Pryor: Holm Transportation Folder, Box C-16, YNP Archives

¹³ Acting Secretary to Maj. Henry L. Allen, June 23, 1908, Army File Doc. 8179, YNP Archives

¹⁴ Geo. Pryor to Maj. H.C. Benson, Oct. 25, 1909, with blueprints of store, Army Files Doc., YNP Archives

¹⁵ *Livingston Park County News*, clipping from 1961, Georgann Pryor, Box 11-2, Biographical files, YNP Archives

¹⁶ Assignment of Lease (Copy), George Pryor, dated Oct. 19, 1912, Box C-16, Pryor & Pryor Folder, YNP Archives

Butte, and Helena.¹⁷ A permit was granted to him on January 4, 1913, but he never followed through with the enterprise. It was noted in a letter of September 1913 by the Acting Superintendent that Mr. Pryor decided he did not want to engage in this business, "is no longer in the park" and was unable to fulfill the obligations of his permit.¹⁸

In September 1912 George also applied for permission to establish a permanent steam laundry at Mammoth to serve post employees and other local residents. A Chinese man named Sam Toy operated the only other laundry service in one of James McCartney's old hotel buildings. The Post Surgeon described that business as an "eyesore" and noted that the poor quality of work done was such that many of the post employees were having their laundry done in Gardiner or Livingston. However, like the dairy proposal, nothing came of this enterprise, and there is little mention of George Pryor in later business records of the store or of the park.¹⁹

The Trischman sisters were now firmly in control of the business, and life appeared to be going quite well for them, but things had not always been that way. Their introduction to life in Yellowstone began with a bad experience that surely affected them throughout their lives.

Anna was born to George and Margaret Gleason Trischman on July 18, 1884, in Montana. Brother Harry was born early in 1886 at Fort Custer, and sister Elizabeth followed on December 22, 1886.²⁰ The fourth child, Joseph, was born July 29, 1893.²¹

Early in 1899 the Trischman family was residing in Billings, Montana. According to the June 10, 1899, issue of the *Livingston Enterprise*, Mrs. Trischman attempted suicide in the cowshed behind their house with a large butcher knife. Although trying to sever her jugular vein, she succeeded only in making an ugly wound on her throat. She claimed to have been assaulted by an unknown man, but authorities doubted her story and she was judged insane and sent to the mental hospital at Warm Springs, Montana. The newspaper clipping indicated that she had improved enough by late May to be discharged from the institution.²² George was anxious to reunite his family in Yellowstone where he was newly employed as the post carpenter, and he secured her release from the asylum on May 29.²³

However, she was not cured, as was indicated in a letter of June 10 from O. G. Warren, M.D., Superintendent of the Insane Asylum at Warm

Springs, to Timothy Burke, U.S. Attorney for the District of Wyoming in Cheyenne. He stated that Margaret was admitted on April 16 suffering from melancholia and that she was removed by her husband on May 29. He emphasized that "There was no improvement in her condition."²⁴ The *Livingston Enterprise* noted that the family spent the following night at the Park Hotel in Livingston before taking the train up to Cinnabar.²⁵ The family was barely settled into their new residence at Mammoth, when on June 3rd around 5 p.m., Margaret took a large hunting knife and slashed the throat of young Joseph, almost severing his head from his body. She chased the other horrified children, but they safely escaped to a neighbor's house. She was found later back at the cottage and was taken to the post guardhouse by authorities.

U.S. District Attorney Burke came up from Cheyenne a few days later and ascertained her to be quite insane. On July 8 she was sent by train to a mental institution in Washington, D. C. Somewhere between Point of Rocks and Dailey's Ranch in Paradise Valley, she jumped from the train into the Yellowstone River, and despite intense searches, her body was never found. Joseph was buried June 4 in the cemetery near the current horse operation at Mammoth, and his marble headstone featuring a pair of small shoes and socks on its top can still be seen.²⁶

Despite the tragedy, life went on for the Trischman family. Sometime afterward, Anna taught school at Fort Yellowstone before marrying George Pryor.²⁷ Elizabeth spent her last year of high school at the Park County High School in Livingston

¹⁷ Geo. Pryor to Col. L.M. Brett, Sept. 9, 1912, Box 21, Item 42, File No. 30, YNP Archives.

¹⁸ However, some question exists in this matter, as F. E. George, Chief Engineer for the Yellowstone Park Hotel Co., mentioned in a letter to architect Robert Reamer that "George Pryor is now proprietor of a dairy, furnishing milk for people around the Post." The letter was dated October 23, 1912. Original letter from the author's collection.

¹⁹ H.D. Bloomberg to the Commanding Officer, Post, Sept. 17, 1912. Box 21, Item 42, File No. 30, YNP Archives

²⁰ Social Security Death Records, RootsWeb.com, Inc. <http://vitals.rootsweb.com>

²¹ Lee H. Whittlesey, *Death in Yellowstone* (Boulder: Roberts Reinhart Publishers, 1995), 210

²² "Shocking Infanticide," *Livingston Enterprise*, June 10, 1899.

²³ O.G. Warren, M.D., to Timothy F. Burke, June 10, 1899, Box 81, Meldrum Papers, A-B File, YNP Archives

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ "Social column," *Livingston Enterprise*, June 3, 1899.

²⁶ Whittlesey, 159-60.

²⁷ Haines, 182.

and graduated in June of 1904.²⁸ Brother Harry entered government service in 1907, served as a scout from 1909 to 1915, and became one of the first park rangers in 1916, serving in various capacities until his retirement in 1946.²⁹

The story of the other branch of the Pryor Store family tree began several years before the arrival of the Trischman family in Yellowstone. George Whittaker arrived in 1891 as a soldier in the 6th Cavalry, and served until his discharge in September 1896. The following year the 4th Cavalry took over the post and Acting Supt. Gen. S. B. M. Young appointed Whittaker as a Scout. George performed as a scout for about two years before he left for the Philippine Islands in July 1900.³⁰ He was employed as a Chief Packer while in the Philippines.³¹

George returned to Yellowstone in 1902 and by March was again employed as a packer and scout for the Army.³² The following year he took a job with the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company as a saddle horse guide. During the next ten years he worked summers as agent for the transportation company at Canyon, and as a scout for the Army during the winters. In 1913 Whittaker was appointed Postmaster, and he bought out the

Lyall-Henderson store at Mammoth, which is the current Hamilton Store.³³

The Lyall-Henderson store had its beginnings with Jennie H. Ash, daughter of George Henderson. Her family constructed the Cottage Hotel at Mammoth in 1885, and even though they sold out to the Yellowstone Park Association in 1889, they continued to assist in management of the hotel for some time afterward.³⁴ Jennie began the combination store and post office in 1895, receiving a 10-year lease from the government, which was renewed for

²⁸ "Social column." *Wonderland* newspaper, June 18, 1904.

²⁹ Haines, 447.

³⁰ George Whittaker to William Nichols, April 8, ca. 1921. Whittaker Papers, 1925-34. Montana Historical Society, Helena.

³¹ A newspaper account from the *Livingston Enterprise*, June 10, 1899, mentioned that the two companies of the Fourth Cavalry at Fort Yellowstone had been ordered to Manila to join six other companies already there. Charles Pember, a saddler with the unit, noted that it would be several weeks before the units could be assembled at Mammoth as communications with outlying stations at Thumb and Snake River stations could be accomplished only on snowshoes. "Charles P. Pember," *Livingston Enterprise*, June 10, 1899.

³² "Local Layout." *Livingston Enterprise*, Jan. 25, 1902, March 29, 1902.

³³ Whittaker to Nichols: Lease Agreement, George Whittaker, March 13, 1913, Box C-17, J.H. Ash & G. Whittaker File, YNP Archives

³⁴ Goss, 95, 106.



Lyall-Henderson store at Mammoth, c. 1895.

YNP collection

10 more years in 1905.³⁵ Three years later she transferred the operation to her brother Walter J. Henderson and brother-in-law Alexander Lyall.³⁶

Upon the purchase of his new business, George Whittaker obtained a 10-year lease for his new business on August 7 that included a rental rate of \$100 per annum. He was also assessed a usage tax of \$800 per annum. The lease was effective from March 13 of that year.³⁷ A small flyer put out by George in June advertised his enterprise as the "Yellowstone Park Store." It appeared he was selling a bit of everything, including souvenirs, post cards, Kodak supplies, groceries, hardware, sporting goods, tobaccos, clothing and other items the traveler might find useful. Hay and oats were also listed in his advertising so that tourists could keep their "weed-burners" moving along on the road.³⁸

Late in 1913 Whittaker sought to take some of the Curio Shops' business by requesting permission to install a soda fountain in his new store at Mammoth. The Pryor women countered his move with a request to the government that they be allowed to sell general wares and Kodak film, items that had been reserved for sale in Whittaker's lease. Acting Superintendent Col. Lloyd Brett solved the predicament, at least temporarily, by refusing both requests.³⁹

Like the Pryors, Whittaker must have been successful his first year, because in April 1914 he applied for a permit to remodel and enlarge his store. Superintendent Brett approved the expansion and Whittaker built a 24' x 30' addition to the front of the store that was faced with ornamental plate glass windows. The cost of the project was \$1746.⁴⁰

The following year big changes were in store for everyone in the park. On April 21 the Secretary of Interior announced his decision to allow motorized autos in the park. Whittaker began thinking ahead and realized that potential profits could be obtained from this new breed of visitor that would begin entering the park on August 1st. He submitted a request for permission to sell gasoline, tires, lubricating oil, and other auto supplies. Interior granted him permission on July 17 and Whittaker began a new phase of his business in Yellowstone.⁴¹ The first few years, gasoline was stored in drums and measured out at a dollar per gallon. In the fall of 1919, Whittaker opened up a real filling station with pumps on the site of the current operation at Mammoth. The following year he added a station to his operation at Canyon.⁴²

Other park concessioners joined into the compe-

tion for this new source of revenue. Charles Hamilton opened up a single-pump filling station at his Old Faithful and West Thumb stores in 1917, and added a station to his Lake store in the early 1920's.⁴³ Yellowstone Park Transportation Company began offering gasoline, oil, and repair services at their depots in 1919. By that time, prices had dropped to a more reasonable price of 40-45 cents per gallon.⁴⁴

Whittaker continued to prosper and in 1918 he established a general store at Canyon. He utilized a log building that had been recently abandoned by the Holm Transportation Company after the 1917 consolidation of the transportation companies under Harry Child. The business was located on the west side of the Canyon, near the present Upper Falls parking lot. Encouraged by the business he was doing at Canyon, he erected a new store three years later.⁴⁵

Pryor and Trischman also attempted to cash in on the gasoline and oil trade when they made a request to Interior on June 4, 1915, to allow sales of these items at their store. The Secretary of Interior responded to Col. Brett in mid-July stating merely that "Pryor and Trischman have privilege to operate a store for specific purposes which does not cover sale of gasoline, oils, etc."⁴⁶ The women were no doubt disappointed, but their business at Mammoth thrived. Financial reports for the 1915 season indicate five employees were working at the store. Those employed were a cook, soda fountain girl, clerk, yardman, and sand artist. Revenues for

³⁵ J. H. Ash, Lease Agreement, Aug. 7, 1895, Box C-17, J.H. Ash & G. Whittaker File, YNP Archives.

³⁶ J.H. Ash & Henderson, Lease Agreement, Box C-17, H.L. & W.J. Henderson File, YNP Archives.

³⁷ George Whittaker Lease Agreement.

³⁸ Sample Letterhead & Brochure, 1913, Box C-16, George Whittaker Folder, YNP Archives.

³⁹ Brett to Pryor, Nov. 19, 1913, Box 72, Letter Box, "Rates 1911-16," Store Privileges 1915, YNP Archives.

⁴⁰ Brett to Secretary of the Interior, April 20, 1914, Box Item 60, George Whittaker File, YNP Archives.

⁴¹ Secretary of the Interior to Brett, July 24, 1915, Box 34, Item 73, "Store Privileges 1915," YNP Archives

⁴² Haines, 358-59.

⁴³ Gwen Petersen, *Yellowstone Pioneers-The Story of the Hamilton Stores and Yellowstone National Park.* (Yellowstone: Hamilton Stores, Inc. 1985).

⁴⁴ Haines, 258-59.

⁴⁵ Lease of April 20, 1918, Box C16, Concessions Records, George Whittaker File, YNP Archives.

⁴⁶ Interior Secretary to Pryor and Trischman, June 4, 1915, and July 18, 1915, Item 73, Letter Box 34, "Store Privileges 1915," YNP Archives.



Candies
Fruits

Cigars
Tobaccos

Hay
Oats

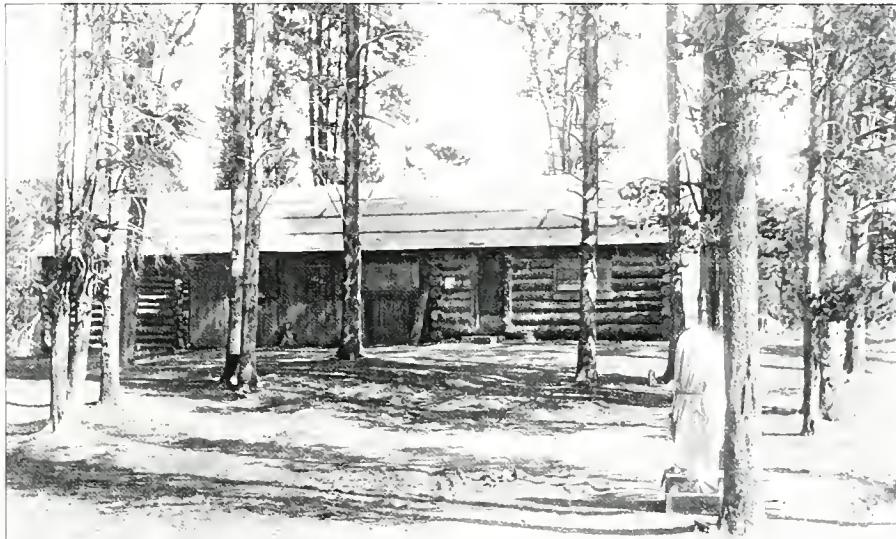
GENERAL MERCHANDISE
MEN'S and WOMEN'S FURNISHINGS
DRY GOODS - BEDDING
STATIONERY - DRUGS
BOOTS - SHOES
GROCERIES - HARDWARE
SPORTING GOODS

Yellowstone Park Store

GEORGE WHITTAKER

Manager

Yellowstone Park, Wyo.,



Whittaker store at Canyon, c. 1915. Whittaker submitted the two sample ads to the Park Service for approval in June 1913, his first year of operation. Ads courtesy of YNP Archives.

the year included \$757 for cigars, \$7,483 for curios, and \$2,880 from the soda fountain. Expenses accounted for \$5,600 in merchandise, \$400 for freight, and \$2,200 for wages and salaries, half of which were designated for Anna and Elizabeth. Total income for the year was \$11,120.34, and total expenses amounted to \$10,173.28, showing an apparent gain of only \$947.28. However, with a little accounting magic, a true gain \$3,163.91 was actually shown.⁴⁷ That same year they made a request to Col. Brett to erect a stand at Devil's Kitchen to sell ice cream, soft drinks, and similar items. Brett denied their request, citing the law prohibiting concessions nearer than 1/8 mile to "any object of curiosity." However, the women did not forget the idea. They would revive it later.⁴⁸

The year 1916 was a pivotal one for all concessionaires in Yellowstone. The National Park Service was being formed and wealthy businessman

Steve Mather was destined to be Director with his vision of a system of monopolies in the national parks. Part of the perceived problem in the park was that too many businesses were competing for the same tourist dollars. The 'pie' could only be split so many ways and competition for those 'pieces' was fierce. By 1915 concessions in the park included: five hotels and two lunch stations run by the Yellowstone Park Hotel Company; three stage-coaches lines; three permanent camp companies, each offering five camps, two lunch stations, and transportation services; several different traveling camps; the Haynes Photo Shops; and several different general store operations, including those of Pryor & Trischman, Whittaker, and Charles Hamilton.

Mather felt the situation was too competitive.

⁴⁷ Pryor & Pryor, Letter Box, Item 52, "Financial Reports of Concessionaires," File 130, YNP Archives

⁴⁸ Col. Brett to Pryor, Nov. 19, 1915, Box 72, YNP Archives.

Companies were trying to undermine their competitors and there was a duplication of services at all locations. This resulted in excessive park lands being used for concession activities, and poor service for the customer. Businesses competing against each other were not generating enough revenue to provide for increased service and improved facilities. Mather's solution was a system of "controlled monopolies." Government could control excessive charges to the public, and fewer businesses would be easier to administer. The remaining companies would in theory generate enough income to build new facilities, upgrade existing buildings, and to provide for improved or additional services.⁴⁹

In 1917 Mather's ideas were implemented and drastic changes resulted. All hotel operations were brought under the control of the Yellowstone Park Hotel Company, and the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company was designated to operate the transportation system. Harry Child owned both of these companies. The Wylie and Shaw & Powell camping companies were consolidated under the auspices of the Yellowstone Park Camping Company, with duplicate operations being eliminated at all locations. By 1924 Harry Child would also own this company. The Old Faithful Camps Company, which operated on a year-to-year lease, and run by the Hefferlin brothers in Livingston, Montana, was denied renewal due to poor service.⁵⁰

Luckily for Pryor & Trischman and Whittaker, Mather had not focused his reorganizations on the

general retail businesses. Hamilton was firmly in control of the stores at Old Faithful, Lake and West Thumb. Whittaker enjoyed no competition at Canyon, and he shared the commerce at Mammoth with the Trischman sisters. Each concern at Mammoth was allowed certain privileges that were not shared with the other. Apparently Mather felt the general stores were not a problem at this time and they were allowed to operate unmolested after the Park Service took over in 1918.

With all the prospective changes, Pryor & Trischman were issued a lease for only one year in 1916. Their yearly rental fee remained at \$50, but the lease now also allowed the sale of toiletries, newspapers, hats, veils, gloves, and colored glasses.⁵¹ By 1918 the dust had settled from the shakeouts in the transportation and camping companies, and due to their favorable business (and no doubt personal) relationships with the previous administrations, the women were again given a 10-year lease for their store.⁵² The Wylie Camp at Swan Lake Flats was closed and a new camp established at Mammoth on the flats on the south side of Capi-

⁴⁹ Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1951), 120-27.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Pryor Lease, April 10, 1916, Box C16, Pryor & Pryor; Holm Transportation Folder, YNP Archives

⁵² Lease of Aug. 18, 1917, Box C8, Pryor Stores, Inc., folder, YNP Archives



Park Curio
Shop, 1917.

YNP collection

tol Hill.⁵³ This would prove to be good news for both the Trischmans and Whittaker as it meant the potential for increased business to them.

By 1917 Anna was spending winters in Helena where daughter Georganna, now 9 years old, attended school. A letter that year from neighbor Judge John Meldrum to his niece indicated that Anna's youngest daughter Margaret was staying at Mammoth during the winter with her grandfather and "Aunt Hattie", who was probably Elizabeth. Meldrum, 74 years old, had been appointed the first U.S. Commissioner in Yellowstone in 1894. The Trischman sisters had taken their neighbor "under their wings" and he spoke fondly of them in his letters. When Anna and Georganna came to Mammoth for Christmas, Anna had a full Santa suit made for Meldrum. He visited the children and brought them each four or five dolls and a 2-story dollhouse, six feet long, and 3 feet wide, complete with six furnished rooms.⁵⁴ If the girls knew Santa was the "Judge", they never let on.

In 1920 the ladies began conducting weekly picture shows, and dances twice weekly at the Mammoth Post Exchange. Records do not indicate how long they provided this service, but the park Superintendent noted in his annual report that the activities were "especially appreciated by park employees."⁵⁵ Financial figures for the 1922 season at the Curio Shop show yearly sales of over \$24,000, with a profit of just under \$3,000, in addition to the ladies' yearly salaries. Employees received board as part of their earnings; the yardman, cooks, and sand artist earned \$60 per month, and waitresses \$40 per month, plus tips.

Two years later the lease of 1917 was relinquished and a new 10-year lease negotiated. The basic fee structures changed, and Pryor & Trischman were committed to fees of 1% on gross sales up to \$20,000. An additional 1% was to be levied for each \$20,000 over that, up to a maximum of 4% for gross revenues exceeding \$60,000.⁵⁶ A new provision of the lease allowed the establishment of a deli at the newly established "free auto camp" at Lower Mammoth. The ladies jointly ran this new business with George Whittaker. At this same time George had also been allowed to establish small branch stores at both the Mammoth and Canyon campgrounds.⁵⁷ Judge Meldrum described the campgrounds in 1925 as "veritable beehives...with [fire] wood, running water toilets, laundries, shower baths, and electric lights."⁵⁸

In the early 1920's, the sisters apparently saved enough money to buy a house in Los Angeles where they began spending their winters. Other concession operators and Yellowstone personnel did the same. Meldrum drove to Los Angeles with the sisters after the 1924 season and spent several months there, enjoying himself immensely. He mentioned in his 1925 letter that he "met more old Wyoming friends here during the three months...than I would see here [Yellowstone] in that many years."⁵⁹

Although the Trischmans had been turned down in their request to establish a refreshment stand at Devil's Kitchen in 1915, Interior approved a later one in 1924. The lease allowed them to establish the Devil's Kitchenette and sell nonalcoholic cold drinks and ice cream.⁶⁰ The following year the 10-year lease of 1924 was amended to include the Kitchenette. Financial reports for 1925 show that there were 16 employees in the operation and Pryor and Trischman each earned a salary of \$12,000.⁶¹ Georganna was now 16 years of age, and probably was one of those sixteen employees. In 1925 Whittaker left the deli business at Mammoth and sold his share to Pryor & Trischman.⁶²

The women continued to expand their business and in 1927 they added a cafeteria to their operation at the Mammoth campground. At this time financial reports state that Anna owned a two-thirds interest in the business, and Elizabeth, the one-third portion.

The upcoming Great Depression days did not bode well with concessioners anywhere in the National Park system. Pryor & Trischman showed a loss for the first time in 1931 and 1932. Luckily

⁵³ Goss, 72, 110.

⁵⁴ Judge Meldrum to Niece, Jan. 10, 1917. Army Files Doc. 9306, YNP Files. Mrs. Meldrum died in 1908 at Mammoth.

⁵⁵ "Superintendent's Annual Report of 1920," 58, YNP Archives

⁵⁶ The "sand artist" listed was no doubt Andrew Wald, who was well-known for his expert ability to create beautiful park scenes within bottles of multi-colored sands. "Pryor & Trischman Annual Reports, 1922," Box C8, YNP Archives

⁵⁷ Pryor Stores, Inc. Folder, Box C8, "Concessions Records," YNP Archives

⁵⁸ Judge Meldrum to Niece, Sept. 8, 1925. Army Files Doc. 9304, YNP Files. Apparently, the site was a good one. Photographer Jack Haynes set up a new Photo Shop next door to them a few years later.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Pryor Stores, Inc. Folder, Box C, "Concessions Records," YNP Archives

⁶¹ "Pryor & Trischman Annual Reports, 1925," Box C8, Concessions Records, YNP Archives

⁶² Marsha Karle, ed., *A Yellowstone Album* (YNP: The Yellowstone Foundation, 1997). Commentary by Lee Whittlesey and Park staff.



Devil's Kitchenette, Mammoth Terraces, 1924

bad times did not last, and in 1934 they were back in the black again with profits of more than 15 percent. Profits remained in double digits through 1940, with the exception of 1939. In 1936 they showed a profit of \$26,015 on gross revenues of \$176, 859.⁶³

Even with the bad times in 1932, the women were looking forward to better times. George Whittaker was now about 62, and had been in business for 20 years. He was ready to retire from the park and sell his properties. His lease would expire in 1933, and according to letters written between George and "Billie" Nichols, head of the Yellowstone Park hotel and transportation companies, Whittaker would be required to invest \$20,000 in improvements in the next two years. He complained to Billie that he became "disgusted with this park stuff at times and [I] feel like getting out of it." Charles Hamilton made numerous overtures to buy out the Whittaker's business, but he was never able to raise the funds Whittaker required.⁶⁴ When Anna approached him about their purchasing his business, he was interested. According to 1932 financial statements, Pryor & Trischman agreed upon a purchase price of \$75,000. A cash down payment of \$5,000 was made to Whittaker along with notes totaling \$40,000. They also obtained a \$17,000 loan from the National Park Bank in Livingston, along with a loan of \$13,000 from the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company.⁶⁵

Early in 1932, having come to an agreement on the purchase with Whittaker, Anna traveled to Washington, D. C., to negotiate with officials there on transfer of Whittaker's lease agreement to Pryor

& Trischman. The acquisition was effective April 1, and included a half interest with the Yellowstone Park Transportation Co. to operate the gas stations at Mammoth and Canyon.⁶⁶ Interior issued a new 10-year lease in July that included both operations, and a new provision prohibiting Pryor & Trischman from selling photographs of Yellowstone or photographic supplies and equipment.⁶⁷ This was the result of Jack Haynes, of Haynes Picture Shops, managing to gain exclusive rights in 1930 to the sale of all Yellowstone images in the park.⁶⁸

Whittaker, although now retired from Yellowstone, maintained an active interest his business in West Yellowstone, which included 63 "modern" tourist cabins, gas station, barber and beauty shops, and a store.⁶⁹ He was also instrumental in the construction of the first airport in West Yellowstone in

⁶³ "Pryor & Trischman Annual Reports 1922-39." Box C8, Concession Records, YNP Archives

⁶⁴ Whittaker to Nichols, Dec. 24, 1931. George Whittaker Files, 1925-35, Montana Historical Society. Nichols took over the companies in 1931 following the death of Harry Child, his father-in-law.

⁶⁵ Year-end statements for 1933-35 show interest payments being made on notes to John Olsen, neighbor and friend Judge Meldrum, daughter Georganna (now using the name of Georganna Pryor Lockridge), and brother Harry, in addition to the original loans. By season's end in 1935, the ladies had paid off half of the \$70,000 in notes. "Pryor & Trischman Annual Reports 1922-39."

⁶⁶ "Park Curio Shop Financial Report, Sept. 30, 1932," Box C8, Concessions Records, YNP Archives

⁶⁷ "Pryor & Trischman Annual Reports, 1932."

⁶⁸ Goss, 122.

⁶⁹ "Park Concession Bought Saturday," unidentified newspaper, Mar. 22, 1932, Box H2, YNP Archives.

the mid-1930's.⁷⁰ He lived for almost 30 more years, dying in 1961 at the Old Soldiers Home in Sawtelle, California.⁷¹

The purchase proved to be a good move for the sisters. The depression soon lessened, and business greatly increased for them. By 1936 the general stores at Canyon and Mammoth produced over \$110,000 in sales, the gas stations contributed \$51,000, and the women's original businesses at Mammoth grossed around \$50,000. Although sales at the Devil's Kitchenette continued to increase during those years, only \$850 in sales resulted in 1937, and that seems to have been the last year of operation. Financial reports for the following years made no further mention of the Kitchenette. Salaries for the sisters during this decade varied with business conditions. The years 1932-33 were the low with Anna drawing only \$1000, and Elizabeth \$750. Four years later those figures increased to \$6,000 and \$4,000 respectively.⁷²

The deli and cafeteria operation at the Mammoth Auto Camp lasted through the late 1940's, with some closures during the war years, but after that, they consolidated their operations in the hotel area in upper Mammoth. Pryor & Trischman received a new lease in 1941, this time for 20 years. However, in return for the extended time period, they agreed to invest over \$50,000 in five years for additions and improvements to their facilities. As years went by, lease agreements got more complicated, and this one gave the Interior department the option of requiring new services to be provided, if a reasonable need was shown. It also required that any abandoned sites be restored to their natural condition. A new fee structure allowed for net profits of 6 percent on their investments. If net profits exceeded 6 percent, a fee of 22-1/2 percent of the excess was to be paid to the government. Yearly fees amounted to \$500 for the first 10 years and \$1000 thereafter.⁷³

The war years again took a toll on park businesses, with most park operations being closed or curtailed. The main Coffee Shop at Mammoth closed, along with the cafeteria and store at the campground. What few visitors arrived in 1943-44 could

take meals in the employee dining room, while employee rooms near the Coffee Shop became available for overnight lodging. The store and gas station at Canyon closed, but the main store and station at Mammoth remained open.⁷⁴

After the war, business not only resumed, but also greatly increased in the park. A previous high of over 580,000 park visitors had been established in 1941, but that dropped to just over 64,000 in 1944. Four years later in 1948 that figure increased to over 1 million visitors, most now visiting in private autos, rather than by train.⁷⁵

By 1947 the sisters were definitely feeling their age – Anna was 62, and they had been in business for almost 40 years. It was brought to their attention that if one of them were to die, their partnership legally would be dissolved. In order for the survivor to continue business in the park, she would have to go through the permitting process with the government all over again. To avoid this scenario, they decided to incorporate.⁷⁶ On May 27 a corporation was formed with Anna as president and hold-

⁷⁰ Whittaker to Nichols, Feb. 4 and Mar. 16, 1934, George Whittaker Files.

⁷¹ Haines, 448.

⁷² "Pryor & Trischman Annual Reports, 1922-39."

⁷³ Lease Agreement June 16, 1941, Pryor Stores, Inc., Folder, Box C8, "Concessions Records," YNP Archives

⁷⁴ Pryor Stores File, File No. 900, Part Three, PUC, Box C35 "Concessions Records," YNP Archives.

⁷⁵ Haines, 479, 485

⁷⁶ Pryor to O. Taylor, Supv. Concessions, Jan. 27, 1948, Box C35, File No. 900, PUC, YNP Archives



Mammoth Cafeteria at Auto Camp, 1930



ing 1000 shares, and Elizabeth as vice-president/treasurer with 500 shares. Daughter Georganna was also added to the board of directors.⁷⁷

The two women were ready to consider retirement with the realization that "it's later than we think, and the extremely heavy work of the past few years has been a definite strain on us." The main problem preventing their retirement seemed to be their inability to find a suitable buyer. Several prospective buyers had approached them about a possible sale, but the sisters did not believe that any of them could meet the stringent demands and qualifications required by the Park Service. During the summer Mr. and Mrs. Trevor Povah of the Hamilton Stores operation expressed interest in buying the business. Mrs. Povah was the daughter of Charles Hamilton and was described by Anna as a "splendid woman." Anna also described Trevor as "liked by his associates and has the respect of his employees [and] is well-fitted for any responsibility." Although both Anna and Elizabeth seemed confident with the abilities of the Povahs to run their business in a professional manner, no actual offers were made at this time, and business continued as usual.⁷⁸

Shortly after the incorporation of the Pryor Stores, the sisters made a new agreement with Yellowstone Park Company (YPCo) on the joint operation of the gas stations at Mammoth and Canyon. Under this agreement each partner would retain an undivided half interest in the stations un-

75¢		Special Luncheon or Dinner		75¢	
SOUP	ROAST MEATS	VEGETABLES	HOME MADE ROLLS, BUTTER	POTATOES	SALEAD
	SMALL STEAK OR CHOPS (6 P.M. TO 8:30 P.M.)				
			ICE CREAM		
			CAKE		
TEA	COFFEE		MILK		ICED TEA
HALF PORTION SERVED CHILDREN UNDER TEN YEARS, OMITTING SALAD 40¢					

Cold Sandwiches

Roast Pork, Veal, or Beef, Cold	25
Baked Ham Sandwich, Tuna Salad Sandwich	20
American or Pimento Cheese, Peanut Butter, Minced Ham, Deviled Egg	15
Toasted Sandwiches	5¢ Extra

Hot Sandwiches

Ham and Melted Cheese, Toasted	30		
Bacon and Tomato	25		
Hamburger, Bun, Onion, Sliced Tomato, Pickle	20		
Fried Ham	25	Fried Egg	20
Denver, Toasted	30	Melted Cheese	20

Tempting Luncheon Suggestions

Hot Roast Beef, Veal, or Pork Sandwich, Mashed Potatoes and Drink	40
Vegetable Plate, Poached Egg, Rolls, Drink	60
Mashed Potatoes and Gravy, Portion	10
Cooked Vegetables, Portion	10
Truzzolino's Famous Chicken Tamales, Chili Sauce	35
Vegetable, Rice, Noodle, or Broth Soups	10
All Heinz Soups or Cream Soups	15
Tomato, Pineapple, Orange, Grapefruit Juice	10
Fresh Orange Juice, Small 15 Large	25
Rolls and Butter, Bread and Butter	10
Tea, Coffee, Milk, Postum, Iced Tea	10
Hot Chocolate, Wafers	15

Salads

Assorted Cold Meats, Potato Salad, Rolls, Drink	65		
Stewed Tomatoes	25		
Pineapple and Cottage Cheese	25		
Combination	25	Cucumber	25
Potato	15	Frutt	50
Head Lettuce	25	Shrimp or Crab	50
Choice of French, 1000 Island, or Mayonnaise Dressing			
Saltine Flakes Served with Salads			
Fresh Cottage Cheese, Portion	10		
Eastern Cheese and Crackers	25		
Apple, Berry, or Cream Pies, Made in Our Kitchen, Portion	10		
Home Made Layer Cake, Portion	10		
Pie or Cake a la Mode	15		

Pryor Coffee Shop menu, 1941. Author's collection.

ners, Pryor, YPCo, and Hamilton Stores.⁸¹

By 1952 sales figures for Pryor Stores, Inc. reached their highest level ever at \$383,406.26. Net profits were more than \$29,000 and salaries for each partner remained at \$12,000 per year.⁸² The sisters proceeded with negotiations for sale of their stores to Charles Hamilton, and on September 23 he offered \$250,000 cash for the Pryor Store holdings, to be effective on September 30. He proposed that all accounts receivable generated up to that date go to Pryor Stores, and that all debts be paid off by then. In the spirit of good faith he asked that no inventory reduction sales be held and that "we

⁷⁷ NPS Audit, 1958, Pryor Stores, Inc., Folder, Box C8, "Concessions Records," YNP Archives

⁷⁸ Pryor to O. Taylor.

⁷⁹ "Memorandum of Agreement, Pryor Stores, Inc. & Yellowstone Park Co.," 1947, Wm. Nichols Files 1947-53, Montana Historical Society. The Yellowstone Park Company was formed in 1936 with the consolidation of the hotel, transportation, lodge and boat companies. William Nichols remained in charge.

⁸⁰ Pryor Stores, Inc., Annual Reports, 1947-52, Box C8, "Concessions Records," YNP Archives

⁸¹ Pryor to Nichols, Jan. 30, 1950, Nichols Files 1947-53, Montana Historical Society. YPCo also held a half interest in Hamilton's service stations.

⁸² Pryor Stores, Inc. Annual Reports, 1947-52.

der the auspices of Yellowstone Park Service Stations (YPSS), which managed all the stations in the park. The contract was effective on a year-to-year basis, and could be terminated by either party with 90-day notice prior to season opening.⁷⁹ The business was a lucrative one for Pryor Stores and by this time provided about half of their yearly net profit. However, this high proportion was due partly to the fact that the women's salaries came out of the store end of the business.⁸⁰ In 1948 Trevor Povah was supervising the YPSS operations. He was paid \$500 from the joint operating funds of the three partners, Pryor, YPCo, and Hamilton Stores.⁸¹

play the game honestly and as friends of over the past 40 years." Hamilton told them that "We do not need a lawyer or any auditors for this is a clean cut deal between us." Hamilton admitted in a letter to Anna on September 23, "I would not be interested for a minute if it were not that I have a younger generation to take over. From my angle I will never see the above obligation worked out before I pass on, but I guess I will gamble until that time arrives."⁸³ His gamble paid off, but only for a few more years as he suffered a fatal heart attack in May 1957.⁸⁴

Although Hamilton expected to make money on his investment, a review of correspondence between him and William Nichols, head of YPCo, indicates more important reasons for the buy-out. Both men were concerned that an outside buyer, particularly one with deep financial pockets, could purchase the Pryor business and cause financial havoc between both of their operations.⁸⁵ The service stations at Mammoth and Canyon generated a considerable portion of the Pryor Stores' yearly profits. An outside buyer could eliminate YPCo's interest and bring in a competing oil company to represent them. This might adversely affect both YPCo and Hamilton's gas stations in the southern portion of the park. YPCo already had a shared interest in Hamilton's gas stations, so a takeover of the Pryor operations by Hamilton would also benefit YPCo. And, too, an outside buyer could adversely affect Hamilton's curio and general store businesses in the southern part of the park. A buy-out by Hamilton would give him a monopoly of the general store business in the park, and allow Hamilton and YPCo to evenly split the service station business.

No doubt Anna Pryor was aware of these potential scenarios, and she upped the ante by making a counter-offer on October 7, 1952, of \$300,000 for the business, which Hamilton accepted. Anna would receive \$200,000 from the deal, and Elizabeth, \$100,000.⁸⁶ Out of the total sale amount, which amounted to \$333,000 by the time the books were closed,⁸⁷ the sisters realized a paper profit of \$102,000. The deal was finalized on January 5 of 1953, with Hamilton receiving 1498 shares, and Mr. & Mrs. Povah each receiving one share. The assets were then sold to Hamilton Stores, Inc., and Pryor Stores, Inc. was officially dissolved on March 20.⁸⁸ According to an insurance audit in September of 1950, the Pryor Stores' property at Mammoth consisted of the Park Curio Shop itself, with a single-

story garage and warehouse located behind it, and the general store, service station and single-story employee dormitory located at the rear. Also at Mammoth were the general store, gas station, cafeteria, and dormitory facilities at the Mammoth Auto Camp. The Canyon properties consisted of the single-story general store and gas station, which housed the post office, soda fountain, residence, storage, and a two-story dormitory building located nearby.⁸⁹

Four years later, a brand new facility replaced the Canyon service station, and was located a few miles away at the current Canyon Junction. The station opened on June 1, 1957, at a cost of \$99,000. A new store with 12,000 square feet of selling space, warehouse facilities, and apartments for five employees, replaced the aging buildings near Upper Falls. The store was located in the newly established Canyon Village, opening July 15 of that year, and costing \$650,000. Construction of a new dormitory accommodating 100 employees brought Hamilton Stores' total investment at Canyon for the year to one million dollars.⁹⁰

After the sale in 1953, the two sisters and Georganna returned to their winter home in Los Angeles. In Hamilton's letter he suggested that "It is time you let down on your battles and started to enjoy life because as the Second Chapter of St. Luke says, you cannot take it with you."⁹¹ It would seem that the women were able to do this and both outlived daughter Georganna, who died in November 1961 from a stroke.⁹² Anna lived to be 89, dying on October 27, 1973. Sister Elizabeth outlived her by eleven years, spending her last night in a Glendale hospital on November 20, 1984.⁹³

A sad coincidence occurred that same year when

⁸³ Hamilton to Pryor, Sept. 23, 1952, Pryor Stores File, No. 300-01 Part Six, Box C35, YNP Archives

⁸⁴ Haines, 422, n40

⁸⁵ Hamilton to Nichols, Jan. 9, 1952; Nichols to H.C. Jr., Feb. 27, 1952, Nichols Files.

⁸⁶ Pryor to Hamilton, Oct. 7, 1952, File No. 300-01.

⁸⁷ Galusha letter, Dec. 15, 1953, Annual Hamilton Stores Report 1953-54, Box C9, YNP Archives

⁸⁸ Report on Audit of the Operations of Pryor Stores, Inc., Pryor Stores, Inc., Folder, Box C8, YNP Archives

⁸⁹ Insurance Questionnaire, Sep. 14, 1950, File 900 Part Four – Pryor Stores, Box C35, YNP Archives

⁹⁰ Povah to Supt. Garrison, Mar. 25, 1958, Box C30, File C58, Buildings, Hamilton Stores 1953-59, YNP Archives

⁹¹ Hamilton to Pryor, Sept. 23, 1952.

⁹² "Georgann Pryor...Dies," *Livingston Park County News*, n.d., 1961, Box H2, Biographical, YNP Archives

⁹³ Social Security Death Records, from RootsWeb.com, Inc. <http://vitals.rootsweb.com>

final approval was given for the demolition of the Park Curio Shop at Mammoth. A letter to the NPS Regional Director of the Rocky Mountain Region by the Associate Director of Cultural Resources in Yellowstone asserted that the condition of the building in general had deteriorated and that a significant amount of non-fire retardant materials had been used in construction of the structure. Ongoing studies indicated that high levels of radon and carbon dioxide were in the basement, causing a potential health hazard to employees and visitors. Based on these factors, it was decided that renovation would not be feasible or prudent, and plans were put in motion for the destruction and removal of this historic 88-year-old building.⁹⁴

The action closed out the final chapter in the tale of these two sisters - a tale that began at the turn of the century with an emotionally scarring episode in a land that was untamed and far away from the pleasantries of "civilized" life. The women began a business in the days when the Army controlled the park and civilian administration was still a dream. They passed through the rocky transition from military rule to administration by the new National Park Service with apparent ease. Many other businesses in the park either did not survive this transition, or survived, but with serious changes in their operations. The sisters not only weathered the uncertainties and rigors of World War I and the Great Depression, but also emerged stronger than ever. They adapted their operations to survive the hard times of World War II, and once again, thrived when times returned to normal. After spending a half-century in Yellowstone, they retired with their careers at a pinnacle and left a legacy of a solid retail business operation. Surely they had been through the best and worst of times in the nation's first national park.

The story of the concessions does not end here. Issues change, along with the names of some of the players. As of 2001, Hamilton Stores still operates the general stores, but Amfac Parks & Resorts manages the lodging and transportation systems. Yellowstone Park Service Stations continues under

joint ownership of Hamilton and Amfac. The contracts of both these companies are up for renewal, and outside bidders are making their plays in an attempt to wrest control of the business in Yellowstone. Public opinion, politicians, business and environmental groups lobby to influence policy decisions made by the Park Service. The original intent of the act to set aside Yellowstone for the "benefit and enjoyment of the people" is interpreted differently by each generation. Protection of wildlife and the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem currently plays a greater role in policy-making than in previous years. Groups continue to advocate changes in the monopolistic business atmosphere in the park to allow for increased competition. Controversy stemming from the air and noise pollution of snowmobiles and the overcrowding of the roads during summer has the potential to change transportation operations drastically in the future, affecting businesses both inside and outside of the park. Changes are inevitable for all those involved in Yellowstone, and the "Best and Worst of Times" may still be ahead for many concessionaires.

After 87 years of business in the park, Hamilton Stores lost their contract through the competitive bidding process that no longer rewards prior service. Delaware North Park Services will take over the operation beginning Jan. 1, 2003.

⁹⁴ J. Rogers Memorandum to Regional Director, Rocky Mountain Region, Oct. 1, 1984, Box S6, File S7417, "Property Accountability, Disp. of Real Property," 1984, YNP Archives

Robert Goss has lived and worked in the Yellowstone and Gardiner, Montana, area for almost 30 years and has spent countless hours exploring historic sites in the park. He has self-published two reference books concerning the history of the concessions in Yellowstone. He is currently employed by Xanterra Parks and Resorts at Mammoth Hot Springs.



Portrait of Ridgway Glover
Author's collection

Ridgway Glover, Photographer

By Paula Fleming

"Did Ridgway Glover take photographs of Fort Phil Kearny?"

This is one of the many intriguing questions that has engaged scholars of the American West for decades, not the least of which was Dr. John C. Ewers who regularly inspired me to find an answer to this and many other questions. Frequently he would drop by the National Anthropological Archives on one of his many research quests, always taking time to ask about my own investigations. As anyone who ever had a discussion with Jack on a subject of mutual interest will know, these chats usually lasted longer than time he allotted for his own research. Inspiration leading to inspiration; supposition leading to new directions; bits of obscure data dredged up from memories all came together to deepen understanding and advance the line of knowledge for both parties in what was truly a two-way intellectual street.

What more could one want from a mentor? Clearly Jack Ewers had a profound impact on my career. With his high standards of scholarship and clear, easy style of writing, he encouraged and guided me to the very end. It was with great sadness that the work on Glover had to continue without the benefit of his presence. While all of the questions still have not been answered, he would be pleased to know that progress has been made, especially as prospects were bleak. It is to his memory that I dedicate this summary of my work on Glover: Breakthroughs, thoughts, failures and questions still unanswered all included. While it would have been nice to have answered every question, his legacy reminds us that one can never really come to a complete answer on any topic - there are always new questions and lines of thought to inspire future scholars. So it is with this background that I present my research thus far on Ridgway Glover.

Ridgway Glover was born into a Quaker family of Mount Ephraim, N. J., the son of Elizabeth (Lewis) and John Glover. The first census record to contain specific information about Ridgway is the 1860 New Jersey record for Camden County, Newton Township, Haddonfield Post Office taken on July 17 of that year. He is listed as a 29-year-old farmer born in New Jersey owning real estate valued at \$11,000 and a personal estate of \$2,000. If his listed age is correct, he was born in 1831. He lived on a farm with Maria Glover, 33, likely his sister, and various farm workers. Other Glover family members resided in the area. Clearly, they were successful farmers enabling Ridgway to pursue photography as a career.¹

Nothing is known of why or how he took up photography, but Philadelphia, a major center of early photography, is a short distance across the Delaware River. In all probability, Glover was inspired by photographers in that city and learned the craft by a combination of self-instruction and contact with various studios in the region. He opened a studio at 818 Arch Street in Philadelphia and, in 1864, advertised himself in the *Philadelphia Photographer* as an animal and view photographer. His competitors included Frederick Gutekunst, just down the street, and proposed future collaborators, Wenderoth & Taylor.²

No doubt images of both animals and local portraits exist with Glover's imprint, but the first photographs of historic importance were those he made of the Lincoln funeral and associated locations which he copyrighted on May 22, 1865.³ The imprints on these show that by 1865, he was in partnership with one of the Schreiber family at the Arch street location. George Schreiber was an important early Philadelphia photographer. At least five members of his family worked in his studio including a son who specialized in animal photography. This son probably was Glover's partner and he would inevitably have learned more tricks of the trade by association with such a professional.

Stereo photograph by Glover of house where he was born. Among those pictured are his sister and brother.

Author's collection

According to the *Philadelphia Photographer*,

He was rather eccentric in his ways. We have often been amused at his odd-looking wagon as it passed our office window, and as frequently wondered that he secured as good results as he did. But he had his own way of thinking, and cared very little whether any one else agreed with him or not...We shall not soon forget our first acquaintance with him. A rough, shaggy-looking fellow entered our office with two foolscap sheets full of writing hanging in one hand, and with very little ceremony threw them down before us, remarking that there was an article for the Journal, and walked out. We promised to examine it; we did so, and next day it was our painful duty to inform him that his paper was of no use to us. This brought us another foolscap sheet full of abuse and condemnation of ourselves and the poor innocent *Philadelphia Photographer*. We used about six lines in replying to that, [specific article not located] and were again favored with a fourth sheet crowded with apologies. That was his nature. Impulsive, generous, and goodhearted, to a fault. No one suffered if he could help them.⁴

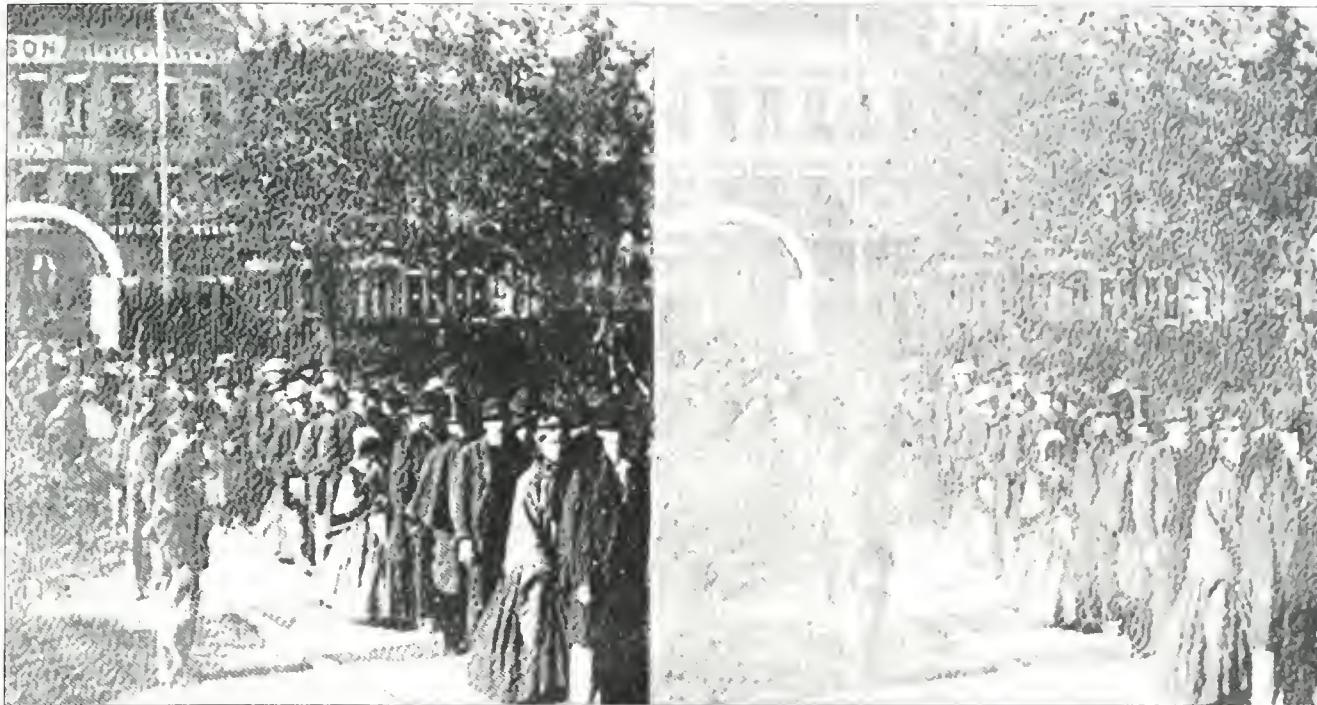
¹ U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1860 New Jersey record for Camden County, Newton Township, Haddonfield Post Office, 836.

² *Philadelphia Photographer*, #8 (Aug. 1864), 5.

³ A set of 26 stereos is in the Huntington Library, rare book department, San Marino, California.

⁴ *Philadelphia Photographer*, 3 #36, (Dec. 1866), 371.





Glover stereo of Lincoln's funeral. Note the poor quality of the print. Author's collection.

Perhaps his personality is why the partnership with Schreiber did not last.

In June, 1866, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* published a line drawing based on a photograph Glover took of an albino deer in captivity in Philadelphia. He also photographed Lucretia Mott's house, also in the city. These were clearly run-of-the-mill subjects and, from what evidence we have, rather run-of-the-mill photographic skills are shown as well. At best, those Glover photographs that survive are average and certainly not artistically inspired. Later, Col. Henry B. Carrington would note that Glover appeared to have suffered some great disappointment in life, but whether this was true or not, we do not know. He did not have a family of his own and clearly the farming life seems not to have appealed to him. For whatever reason, he decided to take his camera and head West.

The late 1860s were a time of great change for the country. The Civil War was over and the country was changing its focus. The great photographic surveys of the American West would not begin until the 1870s, but Westward expansion was well underway through Indian territory resulting in both wars and treaties with the Indians. If a photographer planned to record this land, especially given the cumbersome equipment necessary at the time and the foolhardiness of traveling alone, he would have to travel with an organized group, preferably a military one, and that is exactly what Ridgway set out to do.

On November 27, 1865, Glover wrote from his Philadelphia studio to Spencer Baird, the Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.:

Dear Friend..... I have been informed that an expedition through Utah and Territory North of Salt Lake City intends to start next April. I am very much interested in getting up a set of photographic negatives illustrating the Geology of the U.S. and wish to have an opportunity of traveling through that country and as my means are very limited I would like to go with the expedition if a photographer is needed. I consider myself competent—to give satisfaction in my line of business and if I go can make myself useful I hope in other ways as I am used to taking care of and driving horses....I can fare as roughly and stand as much hardship as most men.⁵

Perhaps he wrote to other organizations as well, but he contacted the Smithsonian because, "Any aid you can give me will I believe be to the forwarding of the object for which The Smithsonian Institute was established," i.e., the increase and diffusion of knowledge. He offered references from local photographic professionals such as Edward L. Wilson, a contributor to the *Philadelphia Photographer* and later editor of his own journal, and promised to send samples of his stereoscopic photographs.⁶

⁵ Glover to Baird, Nov. 27, 1865. Smithsonian Institution Archives (henceforth SIA), Record Unit 52, letter 22. The original spellings are maintained.

⁶ SIA, Record Unit 52, ltr. 22, Glover to Baird, Nov. 27, 1865.

Baird wrote back on Nov. 30 that he was unaware of any expedition being contemplated by the Institution such as Glover requested, but if he heard of one, he would forward his request. By January 1866 Glover had sent Baird a sample of his photographs and a sample of a photograph on wood to a Dr. Gill, and added, "Should you have the opportunity of exerting your influence in my favour, I shall be under much obligation and endeavour to do my duty to the utmost."⁷

Baird thanked Glover for "these beautiful specimens." He stated that he was still unaware of any expeditions going West.⁸ Perhaps believing that a more aggressive approach was needed to further his case, Glover went to Washington, D.C., and visited Baird's superior, Joseph Henry, the first Secretary of the Smithsonian. He brought letters of reference. While no record has been located of this meeting, successive letters show that Henry redirected Glover to the Office of the Interior.

In early February Glover reported back to Henry. He said he could not get an interview with the Secretary of the Interior but the Chief Clerk was of the opinion that the War Department rather than the Interior Department was the place to apply. He left the rest of his letters with the Chief clerk and a note to the Secretary. He further asked for Henry's backing as well as Baird's.⁹

Glover was back in Pendleton, Indiana, in March and impatient to be getting on with his plans. He again wrote to Baird: "I do not wish to bore thee any more than I can help but I thought I would keep thee in mind of my expected expedition."¹⁰

When they met, Baird apparently mentioned an unidentified doctor who was planning to go to Dakota Territory. Glover said he would still like to accompany him, but if that is not possible he would like to go with a government group. "I will send you pictures as fast as I can get my negatives back to Philadelphia. Wenderoth Taylor and Brown No. 914 Chestnut St. will do my printing." (It is curious, and perhaps indicative of a less than friendly breakup of his partnership with Schreiber that he intended to use another Philadelphia photographic firm to print his negatives). He added that he would like a reply by the end of the month, "if it ain't too much trouble," and if Baird can not arrange transportation, he should send all of the introductions possible. Glover ended with a sadly prophetic statement, "I have turned my face westward and shall not back out until I get through if it takes my lifetime."¹¹

It was at this point that events moved rapidly. Baird wrote to Glover in Indiana on March 15 to tell of several opportunities: one was in connection with the Pacific Railroad and another concerning a wagon road expedition to Virginia City, the latter being the best and start-

ing on May 1. He added, "There is also to be an expedition to Fort Laramie and to the Upper Missouri to treat with the Indians to which you might be attracted?"¹²

About the same time, Baird, on Glover's behalf, wrote to the Secretary of the Interior stating Glover's desire to accompany an expedition. Baird pointed out that he asked for no pay but simply subsistence and transportation. In return he would provide both the Department of the Interior and the Smithsonian with copies of the photographs that were made.¹³

Forgetting that Glover left his letters of reference during his visit, Baird asked Glover for the testimonials from the Philadelphia Academy [of Art?] that he was shown before.¹⁴ Glover replied that, except for the letter of introduction to Prof. Henry that he had to leave with the Secretary of the Interior, the rest of the letters were already at the Institution.¹⁵

Glover just barely received Baird's letter before leaving Pendleton. He replied, "'beggars should not be choosers,'" but he preferred to join the Indian mission instead of the one to Virginia City.¹⁶

There had been some discussion of taking meteorological observations and Glover said he was ready to undertake this as well if he could get the proper schedules. He again stressed that he cared "not on which rout I commence for I anticipate visiting all the most important locality before I am through."¹⁷

The final letter setting forth terms of Glover's trip was sent by Joseph Henry on April 30, 1866:

In accordance with your request we made application to the Secretary of the Interior in your behalf for permission to accompany the commissioners who are about to proceed to the west for the purpose of treating with the Indians and with the understanding that you are to re-

⁷ Glover to Baird, rec'd Jan. 4, 1866. SIA, Record Unit 52 (henceforth RU), Box 24, letter 365. His return address is Pendleton, Indiana, where he was staying with his relatives on his mother's side.

⁸ Baird to Glover, Jan. 4, 1866, SIA RU 53, vol. 34, letter 332. These photographs have not been located.

⁹ Glover to Henry, Feb. 6, 1866, SIA RU 26, Box 6.

¹⁰ Glover to Baird, March 5, 1866, SIA RU 52, Box 24, letter 366.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Baird to Glover March 15, 1866, SIA RU 53, Outgoing vol. 35, letter #3.

¹³ Baird to Secretary of the Interior, March [?] 1866, SIA RU 53, vol. 35, letter 4.

¹⁴ Baird to Glover, Mar 21, 1866, SIA RU 53, vol. 35, letter 33.

¹⁵ Glover to Baird, rec'd April 5, 1866, SIA RU 52, Box 245, letter 368. Except for one letter of reference for Glover from a G.W. Fahnestock, no other letters of reference have been located in the Smithsonian.

¹⁶ Glover to Baird, received March 28, 1866, SIA RU 52, Box 24, letter 367.

¹⁷ Glover to Baird, rec'd. Apr 12, 1866, SIA RU 24, letter 369.

ceive subsistence and transportation but no pay, and that a full series of all your photographic pictures is to be presented to the Interior Department and another to the Smithsonian Institution.

We are now advised by the Secretary of the Interior, of his assent to our request, and are informed that if you are still desirous of accompanying the expedition and will write to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Hon. D. M. Cooley, to that effect, the latter officer will furnish you with the necessary letter to Mr. Taylor, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at Omaha, Nebraska to whom it will be necessary that you report by the 12th of May next.

Two parties will be sent out by the Indian Department, one to proceed by land to Fort Laramie, the other by water to Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone. It is probable that you can accompany either party as you may prefer. In view of the destruction of the gallery of Indian portraits of the Institution by fire,¹⁸ we would suggest that you lose no opportunity to obtain likenesses of distinguished chiefs and such representations of Indian life as may tend to illustrate their manners and customs.¹⁹

Glover quickly responded that he, "will comply with thy request with regard to the Indians and have no doubt that I will be able to succeed. I always have in every undertaking so far."²⁰ He then wrote more completely of how rejoiced he was in receiving the news and, in par-



Larry Ness collection

1866 Peace Commissioners

ticular, his happiness to learn of Baird's desire to obtain pictures illustrating Indian life and portraits of distinguished chiefs. "It is a little out of the line I had marked out but gratitude commands the first claim. I shall therefore make solars [in affect, an enlargement] so as to enable me to furnish life size portraits for a set for your museum of oil."²¹ When this was written, Ridgway was already on his way West to meet up with the commissioners. He used Omaha as his return address. This was to be his last communication with the Smithsonian.

On May 15 he arrived in Omaha, Nebraska Territory, and registered at the Herndon House. A local newspaper recorded his arrival by reporting,

Ridgway Glover Esq., Photographer of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, arrived in this city last night. He accompanies the Fort Laramie Indian Commission for the purpose of taking solar and stereoscopic pictures of the various Indian chiefs who participate in the Treaty of Fort Laramie ... Mr. Glover is also engaged upon the pictorial staff of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and we understand that he proposes to take several views in and about this city, with a view of forwarding them to New York for publication in that widely circulated journal.²²

Upon leaving Omaha, Glover's peace-loving world would change dramatically as he left behind the Quaker culture and large Eastern cities he knew for the western expedition he so desired.

The expedition he chose to accompany was one of two Indian peace commissions sent out by the U.S. Government. One went up the Missouri River to Fort Berthold and Fort Union and the second, which Glover selected, to Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory. Regardless of treaty agreements, there was a great amount of travel by settlers and gold speculators through this part of Indian territory, disturbing both the Indian's lives, the best of their

¹⁸ The disastrous fire of Jan. 24, 1865, destroyed not only early Smithsonian records but also paintings of Native American delegates to Washington, D.C., by Charles Bird King and scenes of Indian life made out West by John Mix Stanley. Joseph Henry was particularly interested in photographic images of Native Americans and was instrumental in working with William H. Blackmore and A.Z. Shindler in establishing the Smithsonian's first photographic exhibit in the late 1860s, which consisted of 304 images of Native Americans. No photographs that can be credited to Glover were included.

¹⁹ Henry to Glover, Apr. 30, 1866, SIA RU 53, vol. 35, letter 247.

²⁰ Glover to Baird, May 2, 1866, SIA RU 52, box 24, letter 371.

²¹ Glover to Baird, rec'd. May 9, 1866, SIA RU 52, box 24, letter 372.

²² Charles W. Martin, "Herndon House Register, 1865-1866," *Nebraska History*, 48 (Spring 1967), 42. Perhaps Glover took photographs while in Omaha, but no images have been found in *Leslie's* and any negatives would likely have suffered the same fate as those taken in Fort Laramie.

remaining hunting grounds and their sacred lands. The government, therefore, decided to send two Peace Commissions to negotiate additional treaties with the Oglala and Brule Sioux, and bands of the Arapaho and Northern Cheyenne. The goal was to allow travelers safe access through the territory, to compensate the Indians for damages resulting from this invasion of their hunting grounds and to encourage them further toward "civilization" by teaching them to farm while they gave up their hunting lifestyle. At the same time, the military was sent to build and secure forts along the Bozeman Trail to protect the settlers whether or not the Indians agreed to the treaties.

The Peace Commission going to Fort Laramie consisted of six men: Edward B. Taylor, Superintendent of the Northern Superintendency at Omaha, Nebraska Territory, and President of the Commission; Frank Lehmer, Assistant Secretary, also at Omaha; Col. Henry E. Maynadier, Fifth U.S. Volunteers and commander at Fort Laramie, Dakota Territory [now Wyoming]; Thomas Wistar, a Quaker from Philadelphia; Col. R. N. McLaren, of Minnesota; and Charles E. Bowles of the Indian Department. At the same time, Col. Henry Beebe Carrington was en route to Fort Laramie and then on to establish Fort Phil Kearny on the Piney Fork of the Powder River.

By early June, the commissioners and several thousand Indians were gathered at Fort Laramie. The arrival of Col. Carrington and the U.S. Eighteenth Infantry on the June 13 indicated to Red Cloud and other Oglala leaders, already weary of the continued encroachment into Indian territory regardless of treaty agreements, that the U.S. government meant to have the land by whatever means necessary--whether by treaty or force. Red Cloud was equally determined to protect his people and lands. The government's actions ignited Red Cloud's war and several tribes joined in a coalition against the U.S. The establishment of Fort Phil Kearney in the middle of the Sioux hunting grounds further inflamed the situation.

Ridgway Glover was in the middle of this volatile situation as the first photo journalist to record treaty negotiations in the field, but by both word and action, he never acknowledged or possibly, truly understood that he was in danger.

In his first letter to the *Philadelphia Photographer* on June 30, written during the treaty negotiations, he was hard at work photographing the various activities. He wrote:

I have been in this wild region nearly a month, taking scenes in connection with the Treaty that has just been made with the Sioux, Arapahoes and Cheyennes, and have secured twenty-two good negatives ... that will illustrate

the life and character of the wild men of the prairie.... They will come in with the Commissioners. They return on the 2d of July.²³

But the complex photographic process of applying collodion to the glass plates, sensitizing and exposing them while still sticky, and then developing them was a challenge. The water was muddy, hard and full of sand due to the rapid currents and of the 50 negatives he exposed, more than half were unusable. This was critical because he was using up precious supplies. The frontier photographer had to carry everything needed with them except water. If anything happened to his equipment or supplies, his activities were at a stand still until they could be repaired or replaced. Even in Omaha there were, "but few people [who] know much about the art."²⁴ The further he went into the wilderness, the more difficult it would be to restock. He would have to rely on the military to bring chemicals and other supplies. No doubt, they would be loathe to take up too much precious cargo space from much needed medical and other supplies.

Technical problems were not the only obstacles he encountered:

I had much difficulty in making pictures of the Indians at first, but now I am able to talk to them, yet I get pretty much all I want.... I have succeeded very well with Indian ponies as you will see... Some of the Sioux think photography is 'pazutta zupa' (bad medicine)....Some of the Indians think they will die in three days, if they get their pictures taken.... I pointed the instrument at one of that opinion. The poor fellow fell on the sand, and rolled himself in his blanket. The most of them know better though, and some I have made understand that the light comes from the sun, strikes them, and then goes into the machine. I explained it to one yesterday, by means of his looking-glass, and showed him an image on the ground glass. When he caught the idea, he brightened up, and was willing to stand for me.²⁵

He mentioned making ferrotypes, ("tintypes") for the Indians. Because he could not print his negatives in the field, this would have been the only process available to him for giving the Indians positive images. This diplomacy also means that he was using up valuable photographic supplies.²⁶

²³ Glover, "Photography Among the Indians. Fort Laramie, June 30, 1866," *Philadelphia Photographer* 3 (Aug. 1866), 239.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ There is the hope, however, that some of these tintypes have survived, but to date none have been identified and likely given their exposure to the elements, unlikely.

On June 30, he photographed some of the treaty activities and further reactions of the Indians.

To-day I was over trying to take the "Waheopomony at the great Brulie Sioux village. The wind blew so hard I could not make but one passable negative, though I had some of the most interesting scenes imaginable. Here the division of the presents from the Government, was made and some 1200 Sioux were arranged, squatting around the Commissioners in a large circle, three rows deep. The village embraces more than 200 tribes (lodges) led by 'Spotted Tail,' 'Standing Elk,' 'The Man that walks under the ground,' and 'Running Bear.' 'The Man that walks under the ground' is a good friend of mine. He and the 'Running Bear' have had their pictures taken. I have been introduced to the other two, and they are friendly. So I took all I chose, or rather all I could.²⁷

He also hinted at the dangers of being a frontier photographer: "There was a Mr. and Mrs. Laramie²⁸ who used to take a mean style of ambrotypes here, but he died, and she was captured by the Indians, and after suffering many hardships, escaped and returned to the States."²⁹

Glover expounded on the scenery and wildlife and went into detail about several images he took on July 2 at the end of the negotiations. These comments provide us with clues to identify existing Glover photographs. He was able to photograph the fort from across the Laramie River, and he had the good fortune.

to be present when Colonels McLean and Thomas Wistar were distributing the goods to the Chiefs, and although the interpreters were discouraged, and the Indians seemed unwilling, Thomas and McLean at last persuaded them to sit, and I got a stereoscopic group of six Ogholalla, and eight Brulie Sioux. The wind was blowing, and the sand flying. The negative is, therefore, not quite clean, but all the likenesses are good, and they can be readily recognized. They are,

BRULIES,

'Spotted Tail,'	'Swift Bear,'
'Dog Hawk,'	'Thunder Hawk,'
'Standing Elk,'	'Tall Mandan,'
'Brave Hear,'	'White Tail.'
OGHALOLLAHS (They pronounce it).	
'The Man that walks under the ground,'	
'The Black War Bonnet,	
'Standing Cloud,'	'Blue Horse,'
'Big Mouth,'	'Big Head.'

The Signers of the Treaty.³⁰

His listing has been reproduced exactly as it may indicate the arrangement of individuals in a group which may help in identifying one of the missing Glover images. Of importance in this group is "Standing Elk" which will be discussed later. The two images of the

fort and the treaty signers brings the total of good negatives which Glover mentions to twenty-four.

Because Glover makes no further reference to these, we must assume that at least all of the good negatives were given to the Commissioners to bring back to Washington, D.C., and thence, to ship them to Philadelphia. The bad negatives were probably cleaned for reuse. The editor of the *Philadelphia Photographer* confirms that the plan was to send Glover's negatives to "Messrs. Wenderoth, Taylor & Brown" for printing and circulation.³¹

Glover then started the next phase of his trip--the journey to Fort Phil Kearny. He left Fort Laramie on July 18 and joined one of Carrington's trains under the command of Lt. Templeton. The party consisted of six other officers, the post chaplain, a Mr. White, ten privates, nine drivers, three women and five children and Glover.³² The first 70 or so miles he saw little scenery worth photographing until he made a stereoscopic view of the Platte River above Buyer's Ferry.

Glover's first impressions of the Indians were made during the treaty negotiations. "I there saw the lazy, sleepy red man treating for peace and friendship." But that view would change. After three more days travel they reached Fort Reno and about July 22 they traveled to Crazy Woman's Fork of the Powder River. "[The Indian] has since appeared to me as the active, wide-awake savage in the war-path, and made me think of two lines of an old song: 'They you have Indian allies--you styled them by that name--Until they turned the tomahawk, and savages became."³³

The party was surprised by Indians at Crazy Woman's Fork. Lt. Templeton returned to the group ahead of a string of Indians and Lt. Daniels was killed. "Our men with their rifles held the Indians at bay until we reached a better position on a hill, where we kept them off until night, when Capt. Burroughs...coming up with a train, caused the red-skins to retreat. They looked very wild and savage-like while galloping around us." Glover, the peaceful Quaker, instead of defending the party, reacted as an outside observer. "I desired to make some instantaneous views, but our commander ordered me not to."³⁴

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 239-240.

²⁸ The correct spelling of the name was "Larimer".

²⁹ Glover, "Photography Among the Indians, Fort Laramie, June 30, 1866," *Philadelphia Photographer* 3 (August 1866), 239-240.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Glover, "Photography Among the Indians, Fort Laramie, June 30, 1866," *Philadelphia Photographer* 3 (Nov. 1866), 339.

³³ *Ibid.*, July 29, p. 339.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Burroughs led them back to Fort Reno where they restocked and joined two other trains before heading out again. This time they were not attacked and Glover made a picture of the battleground. Twenty miles beyond, they stopped at Clear Creek where they again encountered Indians. "Cheyennes came into camp; but my collodion was too hot, and my bath too full of alcohol, to get any pictures of them, though I tried hard. They attacked our train in the rear, killed two of the privates, and lost two of their number."³⁵

They reached Fort Phil Kearny on the next day, approximately July 24. Glover wrote: "I am surrounded by beautiful scenery, and hemmed in by yelling savages, who are surprising and killing some one every day. I expect to get some good pictures here..."³⁶

Glover's third and last letter to the *Philadelphia Photographer* was dated August 29, but it was not published until the December issue. He was living in the Pineries with the group of wood choppers six miles from the fort at the foot of the Big Horn Mountains. Although he had hoped to send more information on his photographic activities, that was not the case. "Here I have been waiting for the medical supply train to come up, to get some chemicals, being at present in a 'stick'; but, though unable to make negatives, I have been enjoying the climate and scenery, both being delightful." Not only has he run out of supplies, but he broke the ground glass of his camera and had to make a new one using charcoal from soft wood to polish the glass.³⁷

He spent much of his time hiking alone for days in the mountains, sometimes traveling as much as 50 miles and, again, apparently unconcerned for his safety. The most dangerous situation he noted was an encounter with a large grizzly bear. "I was about firing a ball into his rump, but, fortunately, thought what he was in time; had I fired, you would have received no more letters from me." In his last sentence, he reported that he expected to remain there for the winter. Unfortunately, his luck ran out.³⁸

The same issue of the *Philadelphia Photographer* carried the following:

Obituary. Our apprehensions concerning our Indian correspondent, Mr. Ridgway Glover, have proven too true. On the 14th of September, he left Fort Philip Kearney [sic], with a private as a companion, for the purpose of making some views. It was known that the hostile Sioux were lurking around, but, knowing no fear, and being ardent in the pursuit of his beloved profession, he risked everything, and alas! The result was that he was scalped, killed, and horribly mutilated.... The study of the red man was a favorite one with him, and he asserted his belief that they would not hurt him.³⁹

A Glover friend and the post chaplain wrote letters to

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper concerning the death of their photographic journalist. (Several accounts have been written and they vary in terms of details). David White, the chaplain who traveled with Glover to the fort wrote:

...he was coming from a cabin, some six miles from this place, by himself, when he was killed by Arapahoe Indians (supposed to be) and scalped. His body was recovered and brought in, and will be buried in the Post burying-ground. He was shot with a ball and instantly killed, the ball passing near his heart. I mention this fact that his friends may be relieved of the horrors of savage torture. I do not know his address, and so the publication of this seems the more necessary for the information of any relative or near friends.⁴⁰

His friend, Samuel Peters, told a slightly different story:

He was out sketching for you—his long absence occasioned no little anxiety—and a party went out (members of the 18th Infantry), and found his body. The head was found a few yards off, completely severed from the trunk, scalped. The body was disemboweled, and then fire placed in the cavity. His remains, horribly mutilated, were decently interred, and search made for his apparatus, but it could not be found.⁴¹

F. M. Fessenden, a musician with the Eighteenth U.S. Infantry Band at the fort provided additional information. He believed that Glover had a camera outfit with him and was taking views for *Leslie's* at the time of his death. Fessenden had often joked with Glover about his long yellow hair and that the Indians would delight in clipping it for him, but Glover remained firm in his belief that as he was Mormon and, thus, would be safe with them. Fessenden's prediction, however, proved correct when he and two other men found the body, "...they had clipped that long hair, taking the entire scalp. He was lying on his face, and his back was slit the entire length. Several arrows were sticking in the body."⁴²

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Philadelphia Photographer* 3 (Aug. 29, 1866), 367.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 371.

⁴⁰ *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 23 (Oct. 27, 1866), 94. The post graves were disinterred and reburied at the Custer Battlefield National Cemetery in 1888. Glover's was probably one of the 104 unidentified bodies.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Grace Raymond Hebard and E.A. Brininstool, *The Bozeman Trail: Historical Accounts of the Blazing of the Overland Routes into the Northwest, and the Fights with Red Cloud's Warriors*. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1922), II, 96.

The authenticity and reasons for variations in the reports on Glover's death and the subsequent treatment of the body are interesting points. Even the date of his death varies from September 14 to 17. (The correct date is Sunday, September 16).

To ascertain if Glover made photographs at the fort, the photographic aspects require examination. The crux of the problem depends upon whether or not he was able to acquire the necessary supplies and whether his equipment remained functional. Although a medical supply train eventually did get through, whether Glover received the necessary chemicals before he died is still a matter of speculation.

The *Philadelphia Photographer* said he was out making views. Fessenden believed he had a camera and was taking photographs; Peters said he was out sketching. No camera equipment was found near the body. Carrington wrote to Glover's brother that the only personal possessions Glover had left were a few letters and incomplete photographic equipment.⁴³

If Glover had both the necessary supplies and a complete camera outfit, it would be very unlikely that this would have gone unnoticed as it was very cumbersome and usually required some kind of transport vehicle, which he clearly did not have. As such, Glover likely did not take photographs at Fort Phil Kearny. It is possible, however, that he did have his camera with him and may have been using it as a *camera obscura* whereby the image is focused on paper and traced rather than being recorded on a sensitive emulsion. Like the way he demonstrated photography to the Indians at the treaty negotiations, the process required no photographic supplies. This might also explain why he broke his ground glass and found it necessary to make another. Additionally, it would explain why his affects did not include a complete photographic outfit.

Although Fessenden states that no equipment was found, they may not have had sufficient time to make a safe and complete search or, perhaps, it had been destroyed and the pieces dispersed. Unless the unlikely event occurs that Glover photographs are located with the proper provenance and identification, this aspect of Glover's photographic activities will remain a mystery.

The fate of his Fort Laramie negatives, however, may yet be solved. According to Glover, the Peace Commissioners were to bring the negatives back with them and then forward them on to Philadelphia for printing. Certainly the commissioners returned with their reports. Of the six commissioners who attended the negotiations, the three men most likely to have returned to Washington, D.C., along with their escort, were Edward B. Tay-

lor, the president of the commission, who probably returned to Washington to present his report in person; Charles E. Bowles of the Indian Department, and Thomas Wistar, the Quaker from Philadelphia.

Assuming that the negatives made it back to the East intact, two possibilities can be suggested as their most likely fate. The first is that they made it to Philadelphia. Photo historian Robert Taft stated that the negatives reached Wendoroth, Taylor and Brown in Philadelphia and were printed although he did not note his source.⁴⁴ As important and interesting as these photographs would be to the photo-buying public, especially after the Fetterman Massacre, if these negatives had been made available, they would have been popular and copies would have survived. To date, not even one image under the Wendoroth imprint has been located.

If the negatives actually made it to Philadelphia, and Wistar returned home, he would have been the most likely person to have transported them. Several historian have made in-depth searches of Philadelphia repositories, but to no avail. Nonetheless, the possibility exists that the negatives are associated with Wistar's papers if they exist, or some as yet untapped resource. A second, and perhaps more likely explanation of the fate of the negatives is the possibility that they made it back to Washington, D.C., and no further.⁴⁵

In 1868, the U.S. Government again held treaty negotiations at Fort Laramie. Alexander Gardner, who had made photographs in the Civil War, accompanied the Peace Commission and photographed the events. Gardner was an experienced, master photographer. He, too, had to contend with the difficult regional photographic conditions that Glover encountered. Nonetheless, he knew how to frame and focus shots. Yet when one compares the photographs that were circulated, varying levels of skills can easily be detected. Many of these views are sub-standard to those Gardner normally produced in the field. (These are also general camp scenes not tied to specific individuals or events, such as shots of Indian ponies, and further they match some of the scenes described by Glover).

It is my belief that at least some of Glover's negatives got only as far as Washington, D.C., and further, that Gardner may have later acquired and printed them. It is important to note that Gardner himself does not take

⁴³ Barry Hagan, "Ridgway Glover," in *Portraits of Fort Phil Kearny* (The Fort Phil Kearny/Bozeman Trail Association, 1993), 42.

⁴⁴ Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene* (New York: Dover Books, 1938), 276.

⁴⁵ They have not been located in the collections of the National Archives and Records Administration.



Standing Elk portrait

British Museum

credit for these views. They are merely on the same mounts. Earlier in his career when he worked for Mathew Brady, it was Gardner's position that photographers themselves should get credit for their work instead of the studios for which they worked. It is possible that Gardner had to contend with new equipment, which could explain some of the difference in quality, but it is just as likely that he fulfilled the Government's plan to print the Glover negatives, the images merely being used to round out the impression of the negotiations at Fort Laramie, regardless of the year.

Unfortunately, none of Gardner's Fort Laramie nega-

tives have been located either. If they could be found, their chemical make-up would quickly answer the question as each photographer had their own collodion "recipe" which is as individual as fingerprints. Fingerprints, too, could be present in the once-sticky emulsions and while names could not be attached to specific prints, they could be compared.

I think it is likely that at least some of Glover's negatives did survive the return trip. The first image to support this is a *carte de visite* of the 1866 Peace Commissioners. The entire Commission was present and identified, and posed in front of a wooden building. The image carries the imprint of "D. Hinkle, Germantown."

Germantown is a suburb of Philadelphia that was settled by Quakers and Mennonites. Clearly the commission did not sit for their portrait in Pennsylvania, and thus

the image had to have been made during the time they were convened. The only available photographer was Glover. Further the print itself appears to be half of a stereographic pair with its curved upper edge. We know that stereographs were a favorite format used by Glover, and further it is very unusual for this shape to appear on a non-sereo card. Thus, it is very likely that this group portrait was taken by Glover and proof that at least some of the negatives did make it back to the East.

There is a second image that is also likely to have been taken by Glover. A poor quality stereo photograph of Standing Elk is held in the British Museum collections.



Gardner photographed the 1868 Fort Laramie treaty negotiations. Was this photo made by Gardner and at that time?

This was collected by William Henry Blackmore, an Englishman with a deep interest in Native Americans. Blackmore travelled around the United States contracting photographers and collecting images of the Indians. It was his vision to produce a multi-volume, photographically illustrated publication on the various tribes. Copies were deposited in the Smithsonian Institution and most of the originals went to his museum in Salisbury, England. The museum eventually closed and the collections were transferred to the British Museum. It is important to look at a note Blackmore attached to this image, "Dahcotah's. Fort Phil Kearney Massacre. Standing Elk [illeg.] Carrington." Given the subject, the quality, and the fact that Glover stated that he photographed Standing Elk, there is a good potential that Glover took this image.

How did Blackmore come by the image? The most likely answer is that it was obtained from Alexander Gardner, who worked closely with Blackmore, or else from Carrington himself who knew Blackmore. Further, the images Gardner took and provided to Blackmore carry his credit line. This portrait is uncredited.

To date, these two portraits--the *carte de visite* of the 1866 Peace Commission and the stereograph of Standing Elk--are the most likely images to have been taken by Glover at Fort Laramie in 1866. Nonetheless, there is hope that more have survived.

In the mid-1990s, a small photographic auction in Canada listed a group of photographs taken by Ridgway Glover. The lot consisted of stereographs Glover had taken of his family, both in Camden, New Jersey and Pendleton, Indiana, in 1865. (See photograph on p. 18). Included in the lot was a modern photographic copy of a portrait of Glover (photograph, p. 17). The portrait had been made by a Indianapolis department store portrait studio in 1967. Pendleton, Indiana, where Glover's relatives lived and he visited frequently, is just on the outskirts of Indianapolis. Further the stereos had both vintage and modern notations delineating the relationships of the people to Ridgway. This was clearly the collection of a relative and not a historian who was interested in their family history.

Discussions with the collector selling the lot provided some clues. He had acquired this small group of photographs from an antiques dealer. The dealer, in turn, had acquired them either directly or from another dealer who had purchased the remains of an estate. Apparently, other photographs had been sold during the initial estate yard sales. Further information on the location of the estate or any names could not be traced. What the photographs depicted is also unknown. They may have been only



This image circulated with the 1868 Fort Laramie images by Gardner. However, the photo may have been made by Glover in 1866, given the poor print quality.

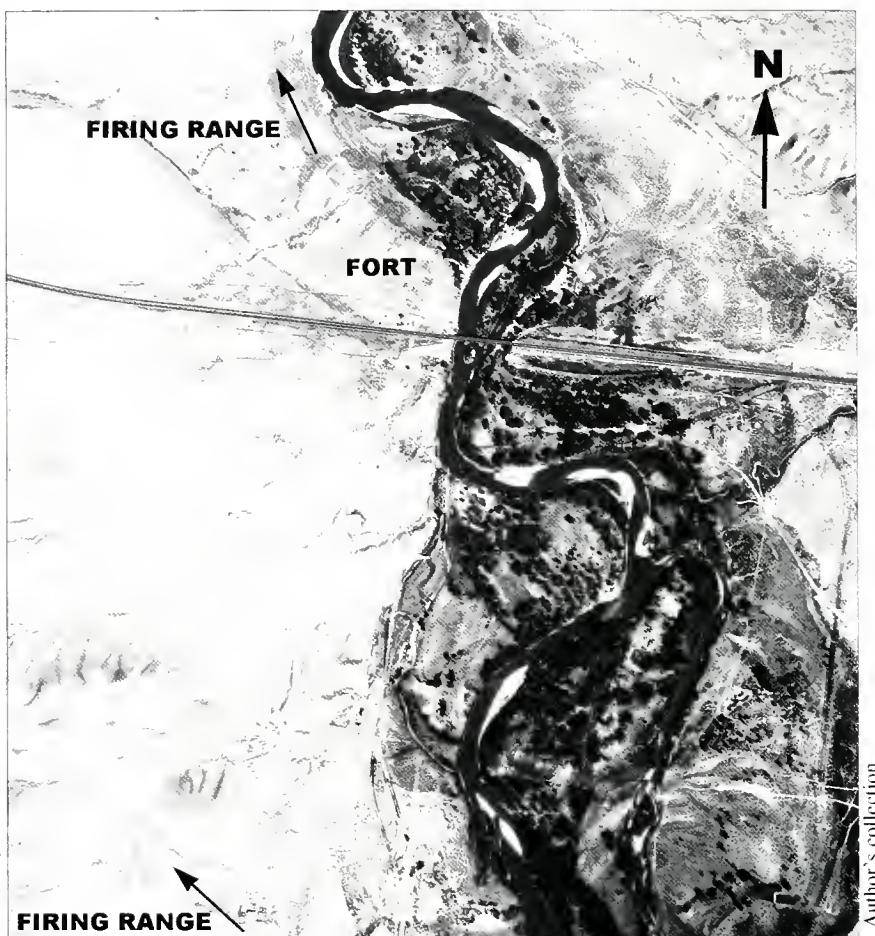
generic portraits in nice albums, valuable to dealers mostly for the albums themselves, or they may have included prints from the missing negatives. Further research in Indianapolis or Pendleton should be rewarding.

Although the main cache of Glover's photographs has not yet been located, positive leads and potentially fruitful new areas to search are yet to be explored. To date a combination of research, inspiration, and pure luck have proven successful. Given the rising value of vintage photographs and widely accessible online auction sites, it is probably only a matter of time before the missing Glover photographs or negatives resurface, or the story of their demise is uncovered. The scholarly hunt continues.

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TARGET PRACTICE AND FIRING RANGES AT FORT FRED STEELE

By Mark D. Hanson



Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles highlighting on-going research in history and allied fields, but this is the first article published by Annals in cooperation with the Wyoming Archaeologist, the official journal of the Wyoming Archaeological Society. Our thanks to Dr. Danny Walker and Dr. Mark Miller for their help in making this installment of our new Annals feature possible.

In August 1990, an archaeological survey of Fort Fred Steele revealed a high concentration of metallic cartridge cases located near the 1876 stone corral.¹ Avocational archaeologists subsequently discovered three lead slug concentrations each adjacent to a pile of river cobbles and weathered wood fragments. Two of the slug concentrations are in close proximity to the cartridge case concentration. Also, additional field survey in 2001 located an additional target position and remnants of a second firing position.

¹ Mark E. Miller and Dale L. Wedel, "Behavioral Inferences Derived from Preliminary Analysis of Military Cartridge Cases at Fort Fred Steele," paper presented at the 49th Plains Anthropological Conference, Lawrence Kansas, 1991.

Two archaeologists, Mark E. Miller and Dale L. Wedel, suggest the concentrations of metallic cartridge cases, and the lead slug concentrations represent one or more of Fort Fred Steele's firing ranges.³ Later research concluded that the cartridge case and slug concentrations were indeed the remnants of two firing range complexes at Fort Fred Steele, each with target positions represented by slug concentrations and cobble piles, and firing positions represented by cartridge case concentrations.⁴ Even though the cobble piles do not appear to conform to any historically documented target architecture, the location of the firing ranges and the attributes of the cartridge cases and slugs do conform to the time period of Fort Fred Steele's military occupation and the historical documentation of firing ranges and target practice at the fort.

Target practice and firing ranges had an interesting history in the army from 1858-1885. Close-order combat, the mainstay of tactical thinking even after the American Civil War, demanded well-disciplined and well-drilled soldiers to preserve the integrity of a formation while still being able to fight. Obedience and cooperation were much more important than a soldier's accuracy with his firearm. Therefore, close-order drill encompassed most of a soldier's training, leaving little or no training in the use of their firearm. However, the importance of firearms training did not go unnoticed by the U.S. Army, or the garrison at Fort Fred Steele.

Capt. Henry Heth was the founder of small arms instruction in the U.S. Army.⁵ Heth's course of small arms instruction was officially adopted in 1858 and later published in 1862.⁶ However, Heth's name was not associated with the publication because he had resigned to join the Confederate Army in 1861.⁷

Soldiers were trained in the assembly and disassembly of their firearms, then in the actual use of those weapons. Soldiers were coached in the proper positions for firing and taught how to properly aim, but the most important aspect of Heth's course of study was learning to estimate distances, which was a "radical departure from the days of the smooth-bore."⁸

Mark E. Miller and Dale L. Wedel, "Continuing Archaeological Investigations at Fort Fred Steele State Historic Site, Wyoming," paper presented at the Joint Midwest Archaeological and Plains Anthropological Conference, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2000.

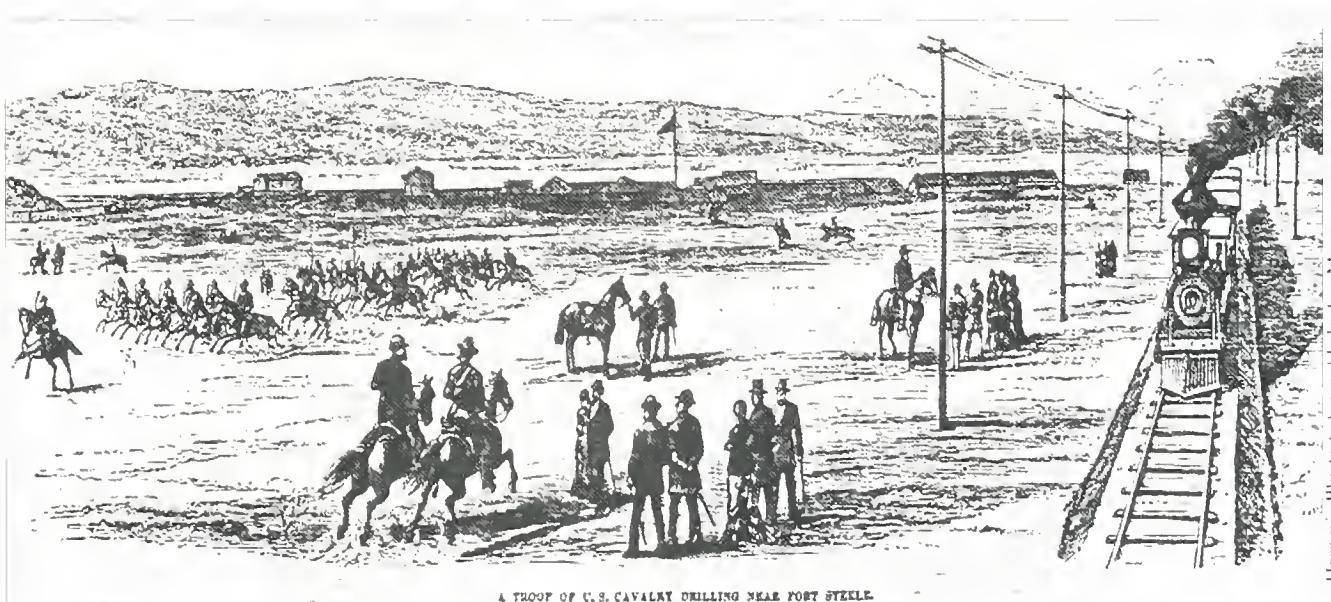
³ Mark D. Hanson, *Metallic Cartridge Cases and Lead Slugs from Wyoming's Fort Fred Steele: An Analysis of Possible Firing Range Localities and Associated Cartridge Case Crushing*, Master's Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Wyoming, 2001.

⁴ Douglas C. McChristian, *In Arms of Marksmen*, (Fort Collins: Old Army Press, 1981).

⁵ Edward S. Farrow, *Farrow's Military Encyclopedia*, (New York: privately printed, 1885), McChristian; Emory Upton, *A System of Target Practice for the Use of Troops Armed with the Musket, Rifle Musket, Rifle, or Carbine*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1862).

⁶ McChristian

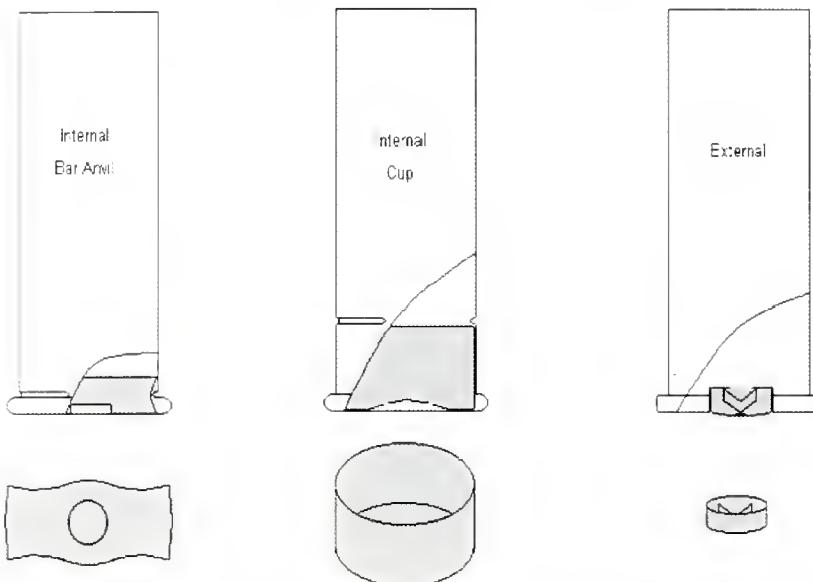
⁷ McChristian, 14



Harper's Illustrated Almanac, 1873

The original caption reads "A Troop of U.S. Cavalry Drilling near Fort Steele." This image is looking roughly to the east back toward the fort across the area believed to contain the northernmost firing range complex.

SCHEMATIC OF BASIC PRIMER TYPES



The internal bar anvil is the earliest (oldest) and the external is the latest (youngest). These are only basic types. Many different variations exist. However, each of the basic types is represented at Fort Steele. Externals are reloadable, and the others are not.

Aside from Heth's system, the only official manuals dealing with target practice were the 1874 revised infantry and cavalry tactics manuals written by Brevet Major-General Emory Upton.⁸ Upton's revisions were spurred by the adoption of the .45-caliber Springfield breech-loader as the official rifle and musket, correcting deficiencies in earlier courses and tailoring tactics to the new firearms.⁹ Unfortunately, Upton's treatment of target practice was very brief, covering aiming techniques, physical characteristics of targets, and procedures for firing.

The renaissance of small arms instruction and target practice was initiated by the official adoption of Colonel Theodore T. S. Laidley's *A Course of Instruction in Rifle Firing* by the U.S. Army in 1879.¹⁰ Much like Heth, Laidley discussed the physical attributes and handling of the rifle, carbine, and cartridges, followed by ballistics, estimation of distance, and proper aiming and firing exercises. Laidley also explored target shape, target architecture, range layout and location, duties of range personnel, and even the best time of day to use firing ranges.

Externally primed metallic cartridge cases, adopted in 1866 by the Army, were easily reloaded, and in 1879 the Frankford Arsenal began producing reloading equipment. The significance of reloading equipment lies in the impact it had on target practice. Reloaded cartridges were considered less reliable than new cartridges, and were not used in combat.¹¹ However, reloaded cartridges increased the number of available rounds for practice.

Not surprisingly Laidley's course of instruction provides an in-depth discussion of cartridge reloading.

Despite the adoption of Laidley's system, the ordnance department actively sought to improve the effectiveness of their weaponry, and published extensively on both the training of soldiers and the problems associated with small arms fire. In 1876, the anomalies of small arms fire was analyzed,¹² followed in 1880 with a report of the effectiveness of long range firing,¹³ and 1881 with an explanation of projectile deflection.¹⁴ Published three years later, Ordnance Notes No. 340 dealt directly with target practice. Intended for soldiers, the publication synthesized small arms instruction, summarizing the essential points to successful marksmanship.¹⁵

Due to ambiguities and vagueness in the Laidley system, Capt. Stanhope E. Blunt was charged with devel-

⁸Emory Upton, *Cavalry Tactics, United States Army*. (New York: Appleton and Company, 1874); Upton, *Infantry Tactics, Double and Single Rank*. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968, reprint of 1874 edition).

⁹ McChristian.

¹⁰ Theodore T. S. Laidley. *A Course of Instruction in Rifle Firing*. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., revised ed., 1880).

¹¹ McChristian.

¹² *Anomalies in Small Arm Practice*, Ordnance Notes, No. 86. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1878).

¹³ *Long-Range Firing*, Ordnance Notes, No. 141. (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1880).

¹⁴ *Deflections of Small-Arm Projectiles*, Ordnance Notes, No. 163 (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1881).

¹⁵ *Target Practice-Information for Soldiers*, Ordnance Notes, No. 340 (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1884).

oping another new course in small arms instruction.¹⁶ In 1885, Blunt's *Instructions in Rifle and Carbine Firing* was officially adopted. Blunt initiated the use of an elliptical target with a vertical long axis to compensate for an uncontrollable vertical dispersion of shots caused by anomalies in cartridge manufacture and vertical flexing of the firearm barrel. Blunt's system also was the first official course of small arms instruction to include discussion of gallery practice (indoor target practice and drill using reduced charge cartridges), and mounted and dismounted revolver firing.¹⁷

Small arms instruction was a significant part of the military regimen at Fort Fred Steele from the post's establishment in 1868 until its abandonment in 1886. Perhaps the first mention of target practice is in the September 30, 1869, Inspection Report for Fort Fred Steele. The Inspecting Officer wrote: "Usual Sunday morning and monthly inspections held, as also target practice. There have been no drills held, the duty at the post requiring the whole command."¹⁸ The following year, Privates Martin Esinger, Isaac Kurtz, and Henry Baker were reported as the best shots in their infantry companies, and subsequently excused from guard and fatigue duties.¹⁹ Soldiers were even killed on firing ranges at Fort Fred Steele. On September 13, 1882, Private J.C. Walters was accidentally shot and killed during target practice.²⁰

Miller and Wedel point out early Fort Fred Steele documents seem to mention target practice only when it was not held.²¹ Post Returns note bad weather, lack of ammunition, and other duties of the post as justification for canceling target practice.²² However, mention of only canceled target practice implies scheduled target practice was a common occurrence, even if haphazard or irregular. Details of target practice may have been unnoteworthy, because practice was a common event, like raising the flag, feeding the stock, or daily drill.

Incentives for regular practice include increased availability of ammunition for target practice,²³ acknowledgment of target practice and exceptional marksmen in official documents, annual prizes, and official marksmanship decorations.²⁴ Orders issued in February 1883 reveal gallery practice was conducted on the porches of the barracks during the winter when snow made outdoor practice impractical.²⁵

The frequency of target practice was nevertheless quite variable. The September 1st Inspection Report filed in 1879 states target practice was held as often as the weather and duties of the post allowed. With supplementary hunting opportunities, "almost the entire command have materially attained a fair degree of accu-

raey."²⁶ From 1880 to 1886 the frequency of target practice increased from one day a week to daily.²⁷ The 1881 Inspection Report has small arms instruction scheduled as follows: target practice, once a week; estimating distance drills, once a week; and four mounted cavalry drill per week with a Sunday inspection. In 1882 target practice was conducted four to seven times per month, twice a week in 1883, and daily in 1884. A letter, written in 1882, noted that the most suitable time of year for outdoor target practice at Fort Fred Steele was June through September.²⁸

Laidley's course of instruction was likely used shortly after its adoption in 1879, but it does not appear in official Fort Fred Steele documentation until 1881.²⁹ The 1881 general order noted the construction of a target range with a new Laidley's Revolving Target. Despite the adoption of Blunt's system in 1885, Fort Fred Steele continued to use the Laidley System until the post was abandoned.³⁰ Prior to 1879, no system of target practice is mentioned by name.

Geographically, the firing ranges at Fort Fred Steele were never clearly defined. An 1882 letter to the Adjutant General of the Department of the Platte describes one 1,600-yard range with post, flags, and two sizes of cloth and paper targets.³¹ Unfortunately, the location was not given. The same letter mentions the capability of reloading cartridges, and "facilities for indoor practice."³²

In 1883, two firing ranges were mentioned. One was a 300-yard range and the other, a 1,200-yard range. One

¹⁶ McChristian

¹⁷ Stanhope E. Blunt, *Instructions in Rifle and Carbine Firing*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1885)

¹⁸ U. S. Army Inspection Report, Fort Fred Steele, September 30, 1869, 6. Copies on file at the University of Wyoming Archaeological Repository, Laramie.

¹⁹ General Orders, Fort Fred Steele, Sept. 27, 1870

²⁰ Letters Sent, Fort Fred Steele, September 13, 1882.

²¹ Miller and Wedel, "Behavioral Inferences..." 3.

²² Post Returns, Fort Fred Steele, June 1868-Nov. 1886. Microfilm on file at the Office of the Wyoming State Archaeologist, Laramie.

²³ Adjutant General's Office, *General Order No. 50*, General Orders, 1869 (Washington, D. C.: GPO, 1869)

²⁴ Inspection Reports, Sept. 30, 1869, Adjutant General's Office, *General Order No. 50*, General Orders, 1869 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1870).

²⁵ General Orders, No. 13, Fort Fred Steele, 1883

²⁶ Inspection Reports, September 1, 1879

²⁷ Inspection Reports, Sept. 15, 1881; Sept. 30, 1882, Oct. 13, 1883; June 26, 1884; Nov. 26, 1886.

²⁸ Letters Sent, Fort Fred Steele, Sept. 30, 1882.

²⁹ General Orders No. 32, Fort Fred Steele, 1881

³⁰ Inspection Reports, 1883-1886

³¹ Letters Sent, Fort Fred Steele, Sept. 30, 1882.

³² *Ibid*

range was located north of the post near the stable and one south of the post near the trader's house.³³ Which was at each location was not specified. These range locations conform to the recent archaeological discoveries. In the 1885-1886 annual report, two 300-yard and two 1000-yard targets were specified.³⁴

As many as eight different ranges are historically documented. However, the documentation is far from clear. Eight separate firing ranges were probably not in existence at any one time. Different ranges may have been reconfigured from existing ranges, and new ranges could have replaced old ones. Also, some ranges may have been abandoned and reused later.

Archaeological research reveals that a post dump overlies the northern firing range complex. Whether or not the dump and the firing range were used at the same time is unclear, but firing range locations appear to have had multiple uses.

Collection of spent cartridge cases from the firing ranges at Fort Fred Steele, for either destruction or reloading, has not been documented. However, collection probably was conducted for reloading, based on the references to cartridge reloading equipment and facilities.³⁵ Spent cartridge cases may also have been intentionally crushed on Fort Fred Steele's firing ranges in response to orders issued in 1876 by the Adjutant General, known as General Orders, No. 13.

The order stated:

It appears from reports of officers serving on the plains, as well as from experiments conducted in the Ordnance Department, that the empty metallic cartridge-shells for the Springfield carbine and musket can, after being fired, be used an indefinite number of times by refilling and recapping. Great care will therefore be exercised by all officers to prevent Indians from procuring the empty shells thrown away by troops after firing, either in action or at target practice.³⁶

Clearly, the U.S. Army wanted to prevent the use of U.S. ammunition components against U.S. soldiers by Native Americans. The order, however, did not provide guidelines for compliance although the collection and/or destruction of spent cartridge cases would have been the most obvious mechanisms for compliance with General Orders No. 13. Historical documents from Fort Fred Steele do not specifically address the issue. Whether collection for reloading at Fort Fred Steele was a response to General Orders No. 13 is unknown. Archaeological research revealed virtually all of the metallic cartridge cases recovered from the firing range complexes were

severely damaged, suggesting at least some intentional crushing, but the relationship to apparent cartridge crushing and General Order No. 13 is unclear.³⁷

Target practice and firing ranges at Wyoming's Fort Fred Steele are not historically well documented. However, spurred by archaeological discovery, historical research has shown target practice to be a significant part of garrison life at Fort Fred Steele. Awards were given for good marksmanship, firing ranges were built and upgraded, official reports made regular mention of both the failings and triumphs of garrison target practice, and a soldier was even accidentally killed on a firing range. Understanding target practice and firing ranges is yet another chapter in the broader understanding of Fort Fred Steele, and may also provide a glimpse into the history of other Wyoming military garrisons and the diverse history of Wyoming in general.

³³ Inspection Reports, Oct. 13, 1883.

³⁴ Miller and Wedel, "Continuing Archaeological..." 2000.

³⁵ Letters Sent, Fort Fred Steele, July 14, 1881; September 30, 1882.

³⁶ Adjutant General's Office, "General Orders No.13," *General Orders: 1876*. (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1877).

³⁷ Hanson, 44-45.

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Annals of **WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal

Summer 2002

Vol. 74, No. 3



The Cover

*“Crystal Falls, Targhee Creek”
a photograph
by William Henry Jackson*

Born in New York in 1843, Jackson began work as a photographer in Vermont. After service in the Civil War, he moved by wagon train to California, later returning to settle in Omaha, Nebraska. From 1870-78, he was official photographer for the Hayden survey. It was while serving with Hayden that Jackson made the first photographs of Yellowstone in 1871. From 1879 to 1894, he operated a photography studio and publishing company. It was during this period that the cover image was executed. After an assignment photographing around the world for a New York magazine, Jackson moved to Detroit where he operated a publishing business until his retirement at the age of 81. He moved to Washington, D.C., wrote about the Old West and painted a series of Western scenes for the U. S. Government. He made a number of trips to Wyoming and elsewhere over the years, including a famous visit to Independence Rock during the centennial year of the Oregon Trail. He died in New York City in 1942. The cover photograph is in the collections of the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the “Wyoming Memories” section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in “Wyoming Memories” also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal’s Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071, or to the editor by e-mail at the following address: philr@uwy.edu

Annals of WYOMING

The Wyoming History Journal

Summer 2002 Vol. 74, No. 3

Inside Federal Prohibition Enforcement in Wyoming:

The Case of Bootlegging Busts in Northern Natrona County, 1928

By Phil Roberts 2

Few of the investigative files from the federal Prohibition Bureau still exist. In researching for this article about investigations into bootlegging around Edgerton, Wyoming, in the late 1920s, Roberts used unique files held in the National Archives Seattle Branch.

The Question of Districting: The Legislature and the

Clear Use of Power, 1992

By Matilda Hansen 9

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Larson, who died in January 2001, spoke with Nye, a UW English professor, in 1998,

about his life, education, and ideas about history

Crossing the North Platte River: A Brief History of Reshaw's Bridge, 1852-1866

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Wyoming pioneer John Richard (Reshaw) built a bridge over the North Platte River. The bridge hastened overland travel, but also provided Richard with a launching point for a multi-faceted business career. The story is told by a veteran Casper historian

Wyoming Picture Inside back cover

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Plaga collection, American Heritage Center

Inside Federal Prohibition Enforcement in Wyoming:

The Case of Bootlegger Busts in Northern Natrona County, 1928

By Phil Roberts

This is the story of some long-lost files, some citizen complaints about wide-open bootlegging and official corruption in a remote Wyoming boomtown. It may be that the case was quite ordinary, but it never may be known because the file is one of a mere handful that survives from the Bureau of Prohibition's records created in the 1920s. Agency files for much of the United States are either missing or were destroyed when Prohibition was repealed and the agency went through a series of reorganizations. Consequently, there are few examples of the process through which federal officers tried to break up illegal liquor-making and selling.

One such file, held in the collections of the Seattle Branch, National Archives, probably was typical of other cases. At the same time, it is unusual for insight it provides into the workings of a small oil patch town

in the 1920s, an era of intense depression in Wyoming. It also demonstrates how important informants were to enforcement of Prohibition laws.

An examination of the files and newspaper accounts of the incidents surrounding the case reveal that, contrary to popular notion, the Bureau was an organized, carefully administered federal agency with competent, honest investigators who responded to citizen complaints. The Bureau faced a disinterested, often hostile public and state officials with political concerns.

Prohibition had lost much of its appeal in Wyoming by 1929. Nonetheless, federal officials continued to enforce the act, ensnaring numerous Wyomingites for illegally manufacturing and selling alcohol. In some places in the state, government prohibition agents knew that local officials were in

league with the makers of the illegal booze and they organized a series of investigations designed to break up the collusion.

On November 10, 1928, Lon Davis, chief deputy federal prohibition director for Wyoming, received the following letter sent to his office in Cheyenne from an anonymous writer in Edgerton, Wyoming:

Dear Mr. Davis,

You being State Federal Officer I am wondering whether some information about the Bootleggers here would be of interest to you or an annoyance. I know where their cashes [sic] are and you can get all the way from two to a hundred pints of liquor. Please treat this offer confidential and if the information will be of any use to you I will give it to you. I met you some time ago Mr. Davis and I believe if you are interested in this I can be of services [sic] to you.¹

Davis, who had held the highest federal prohibition position in the state since March 1923, apparently responded immediately, because four days after the date on the earlier letter, he received a follow-up in which the details of the situation were laid out. A former deputy U. S. Marshal, Davis was well acquainted in the Seattle headquarters. Carl Jackson, the divisional chief there with jurisdiction over Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Alaska, had been Davis' predecessor in the Wyoming job.²

"We have a whiskey ring here and the head of the

ring are Edgerton's officers," the anonymous writer alleged on Nov. 14. After naming several local officials, the letter continued: "This ring think they are just about immune from the law. Your men have been out here but don't get any evidence because everyone is tipped off. As far as drying up Edgerton, that is impossible but their ears can be knocked down."

The writer then provided a store-by-store description of where illegal booze was being hidden. "The large cache is in the vacant building next to the Highfull Cafe," the letter noted. Even legitimate businessmen were involved, the writer said. "Charley the Greek keeps his pints under the Soda Fountain behind the bar..." After naming several others, the writer emphasized, "You can see that if my information wasn't secret, these fellows would about hang me. I don't want any of the local law even to know about this information because I don't know how far this ring extends...."³

The official record is silent as to what happened next,

¹ Anonymous to Lon Davis, Nov. 10, 1928. Bureau of Prohibition Investigation Case File, 1924-33, Box 11, RG436 Records of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, National Archives—Pacific Northwest Branch, Seattle.

² Davis had served as Laramie County undersheriff for Sheriff Ed J. Smalley for two years and had been deputy U. S. Marshal for only 20 months when he accepted the Prohibition position. Jackson was a Laramie native. "Lon Davis Given Office Director of Prohibition," *Wyoming Tribune*, March 11, 1923, p. 1.

³ Anonymous to Davis, Nov. 14, 1928.



Plaga collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

"Eight stills, 2,000 gallons of mash, 45 gallons of moonshine, were seized by O. W. Plaga, federal agent, Alex A. McPherson, sheriff, and O. J. Carter, undersheriff, Natrona County. Made 21st of April, 1925, at Teapot, Wyoming." The Edgerton investigations, held three years later, were made near the site of this moonshine bust.

but in a later letter, the anonymous writer described to Davis how his men had conducted the raid: "They got some stuff alright but it has been kept very very quiet. Not a word about it in the papers," the writer pointed out, indicating that a raid made at Salt Creek the previous day probably gave a warning "so some of them had their stuff put away...there were four stills dismantled right here in town when your men commenced looking around."⁴

At this point, Davis' informant implicated the local justice of the peace who also happened to be editor of the local newspaper, the *Salt Creek Gusher*.⁵ "You see a fine before the Judge doesn't mean anything. You see this ring has arrangement made that they pay \$178.90 each month to run and then if they are picked up by anyone—county or federal—they are fined before the Judge whatever they are fined is deducted from this monthly payment."

The anonymous writer complimented Davis for having "a bunch of trustworthy men" in his employ, because they had made two raids and no "tip-off" had been made beforehand. The writer then detailed how a whiskey-selling operation was functioning quite openly in Edgerton. Again, complete with maps and descriptions of the buildings in which such activities were taking place, the writer provided what Davis took to be an allegation beyond the simple report of disreputable parties making and selling liquor.

After describing where he might find the still, the anonymous source wrote: "The stills that are running are what are known as official stills either run by the officers themselves or the man that runs it gives one per gallon for all they turn out." Further, the writer alleged that at least three truckloads of illegal alcohol brought in from Casper had been unloaded behind the local pool hall. One bootlegger, according to the writer, "sells very little whiskey around here but takes it to Dubois." Another, the writer alleged, "lives in Niobrara County, about 30 miles from Lusk" and "supplies Lusk, Newcastle, Hot Springs also Edgemont."⁶

Davis reported to his superiors in the Seattle office before deciding whether or not to send his agents to back to Edgerton. The next month, Sam H. Scott, special inspector in Chicago, wrote to B. W. Cohoon, describing the information about the Edgerton investigation. When Cohoon asked for more specifics, Scott wrote that he had received the information from the Commissioner of Law Enforcement for the state of Wyoming "whose name has escaped me at the moment." The agent added that the man had "personal knowledge of conditions at Salt Creek and Edgerton"

and could be relied on to help develop the case. Scott told Cohoon that since Wyoming had no conspiracy statute, that federal agents would have the best chance to make a case.⁷

In May, the case was assigned by the Seattle district agent to Robert B. Melville and Charles A. Murphy.⁸ Three days after the case was transferred to the two men, Beman reported to his superiors about a meeting with Jack Allen, Commissioner of Enforcement for the State of Wyoming, but Allen was unable to confirm any of the charges leveled against the Edgerton officials. Because the earlier cases had been made by federal officers, but oddly filed in state court in Casper, Allen did not know how they were handled.

Allen was still unfamiliar with many aspects of the position he had held only since the previous December. Gov. Emerson had appointed Allen state law enforcement commissioner when W. C. Irving resigned under a cloud in December 1928.

"Happy Jack," as he was known to friends in Casper, was a Brooklyn, N. Y., native who had come to Wyoming at the age of 13 to work as a cowboy for the P and O Ranch, 14 miles north of Cheyenne. In 1891, he signed on as a cowboy for J. M. Carey's CY Ranch near Casper. A young man on the way up hardly could dream of a better employer than Carey, Wyoming's first U. S. Senator, governor from 1911-15, and probably the wealthiest man in the state.

Later, Allen joined the Wyoming Volunteer cavalry unit raised by Colonel Jay Torrey to fight in Cuba in the Spanish American War. The unit, made up of cowboys riding perfectly matched horses and named "Torrey's Rough Riders," never saw action. While en route to the staging area in Florida, the train carrying the troop met with a serious accident near Tupelo, Miss., and they never made it to Cuba.

After he was mustered out, Allen returned to Casper to run unsuccessfully for sheriff.⁹ Nonetheless, he continued to work in the field of law enforcement in the county until his appointment to the Prohibition position.

When the special agent asked Lon Davis, the federal deputy prohibition officer, Davis urged that nothing

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Microfilmed copies of the *Gusher* are on file in the collections of the Historical Research Division, Wyoming Parks and Cultural Resources Department, Cheyenne.

⁶ Anonymous to Davis, Feb. 1, 1929.

⁷ Letter, Sam H. Scott, Special Agent, Treasury Dept., Chicago, to B. W. Cohoon

⁸ R. A. Beman to Melville and Murphy, May 20, 1929.

be done until his officers made at least 16 cases. While the two men were visiting, one of Davis officers called from Casper, asking to meet with Davis the next day about a raid scheduled at Salt Creek and Edgerton at the end of May. "It is Davis' theory that if the bootlegger is knocked over too often—oftener than the amount he is supposed to give to the city, he will squeal." Davis was surprised that the special agents were showing interest in the Edgerton case. "He does not understand why Salt Creek and Edgerton should be selected when there are such places as Casper, Cheyenne, Kemmerer and others."¹⁰

Any individual conversant with statewide happenings would have shared Allen's wonderment. On May 18, 1929, the *Wyoming Tribune*, in a front page story, disclosed that the federal grand jury had adjourned the previous day after bringing indictments against 29 individuals for conspiracy to evade Prohibition laws. Heading the list was W. C. Irving, the man Jack Allen had replaced as the head of Wyoming's law enforcement department. Irving was charged with collecting "thousands for protection money during the time he served" in that office. Also indicted was Irving's assistant, James Ader, along with various suspected bootleggers from Rawlins, Thermopolis, Cheyenne, Rock Springs and Evanston.¹¹ The Edgerton "cabal" seemed minor indeed, given the events in Cheyenne and elsewhere.

Nonetheless, Federal investigators continued to press the Edgerton case. Besides being skeptical about the importance of the case, Davis was suspicious about the impetus behind the Salt Creek area probe for another reason. "He expressed a fear that perhaps Salt Creek and Edgerton case may be the outgrowth of politics," the Seattle-based agent wrote. Davis had told the agent that Allen had lost a bid for Natrona County Sheriff and that "his worse reverses were in the districts of Salt Creek and Edgerton." When the agent returned to ask Allen about more details, he told the federal officer that he was not able to help with their investigation. "All my men are now up in that district and it would be impossible for us to make any buys there."¹²

On June 21, Murphy and Melville paid a visit to Salt Creek where they examined the books of R. E. Arnold, City Treasurer. They checked the amount of fines submitted by the Justice of the Peace W. J. Stull from July 12, 1926 to June 12, 1929. On average, the JP (and editor of the *Gusher*) turned in about \$150, the highest amount, more than \$450 in February 1928 and the least amount, just \$20 in April, 1929.

Armed with their audit, the investigators then inter-

viewed Justice of the Peace Stull. State Prohibition Agent L. C. Hurt attended, too. After looking at his records, the agents pointed out that the numbers did not correspond with those of the treasurer. Judge Stull had a ready reply: "In a great many cases, men came to his office and pleaded guilty to liquor violations without there having been any form of complaint filed and no records were made in the office in these cases." When asked about what was done with the evidence, he said it was "always destroyed."

The agents told him that the whole case could be turned over to a federal grand jury. "Whereupon the Judge inquired about what it is we want to know about the monthly payments by bootleggers."

The judge "asked why we did not tell him that when we first came and he then admitted collecting \$50 a month from the men running the joints." He knew of no ordinance that allowed such collections. But it wasn't really fines, he said. It was an "occupation tax."¹³ Stull then explained that the practice had been going on for at least five years through the administrations of three mayors. He named four men who had paid \$50 each in fines for May. All four were bootleggers, he admitted.

Later, the same day Murphy interviewed Dora Pocan who claimed to have lived in Edgerton from Feb. 11-July 23, 1927. "On or about July 9, 1927, I was arrested by Deputy Sheriff Tom Heaney and Town Marshal Fred Rose on a charge of possession of intoxicating liquor," her affidavit said. When taken before Judge Blake's court, she was fined \$50 plus costs. She claimed she continued to be harassed by local officers who ordered her to leave town, "saying it was the order of Mayor Mike Keifer." She said she went to Casper and complained to Sheriff G. O Housley that she was the only one being prosecuted for liquor violations in the area while it was known that many others were involved. The statement was taken by Murphy at Lavoye where she had been operating a small restaurant with

⁹ When U. S. Marshal Hugh Patton died in 1932, Allen was named his replacement, serving until June 1, 1934. That fall, he was elected sheriff of Natrona County, a post he held continuously until his death in October 1942. Obituary, *Wyoming Tribune*, Oct. 13, 1942, p. 11.

¹⁰ Capt. R. A. Beman. Special Agent in Charge, letter to superiors, May 23, 1929.

¹¹ *Wyoming Tribune*, May 18, 1929, p. 1.

¹² Beman letter, May 23, 1929.

¹³ Memorandum, Murphy and Melville, Casper Wyoming, June 21, 1929.

"a small stock of groceries" since that May.¹⁴ Despite her complaint to the sheriff, she said, "nothing was done."

Stull's newspaper had remained relatively silent about the presence of federal officers and totally quiet about any suspected bootlegging in the vicinity. In the June 21, 1929, edition of the *Gusher*, published the day "Judge" Stull was interviewed by federal officers, the *Gusher* ran the following story in the local news without a headline:

Dan Shea, proprietor of the Half Way House, had an unannounced visit from federal men Saturday evening. The minions of the law were en route to Casper and one decided he wanted some cigarettes when the Half Way House was reached. He entered the place and found Danny in the act of serving liquor to a guest. He was invited, and without hesitancy, accepted the invitation of the federal men to accompany them into Casper where Mr. Shea appeared before U. S. Commissioner M. P. Wheeler and put up a bond of \$2,000 for appearance before the federal court to answer to a charge of illegal possession and sale of liquor.¹⁵

Two weeks later, in the July 5 edition of the *Gusher*, Stull commented again about the local situation but, not surprisingly, with none of the emotion of the anonymous letter writer. "

Word reached Washington that the 18th Amendment was not being rigidly enforced or generally observed in Natrona County, so a bunch of federal investigators were sent out to look into the matter. They have honored the field with their distinguished presence quite often the past two weeks to check up on reports reaching Washington and have found to some extent that they are not wholly without foundation.¹⁶

The two investigators issued their preliminary report on July 27. "Owners of pool halls and gambling halls in the town of Edgerton had been paying stipulated monthly fines to the town in exchange for the privilege of being allowed to operate unmolested by town authorities." The report was particularly critical of Blake, the municipal judge. "His records show monthly fines have been paid, and that if a citizen of Edgerton had been fined in some other jurisdiction for violation in Edgerton, the amount of such fine was placed to his credit by Judge Blake against future monthly fines to be paid to the town."

¹⁴ Sworn statement of Dora Pocan, June 21, 1929, Lavoye, Wyoming. The cafe's opening was noted in the *Salt Creek Gusher*, May 10, 1929, p. 3: "The place is on the highway...Chicken will be a specialty."

¹⁵ *Salt Creek Gusher*, June 21, 1929, p. 1.

¹⁶ *Salt Creek Gusher*, July 5, 1929, p. 1 (no headline).

Steve Roberts-Wyoming Almanac collection



The Midwest oilfield, pictured here in a 1920s era postcard, is located near where Federal prohibition officers were investigating bootlegging in 1928.

The report was promptly filed in the agency records in Seattle. The two investigators turned their attentions to cases in the Pacific Northwest and, a few months later, the agency field offices were reorganized. On July 26, 1929, barely a month after the report was filed, the case was transferred from Seattle to Denver. An order from the Seattle headquarters directed that:

Because of the fact that the states of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming are now to be included in the newly created Denver Division, it is requested that authority be granted this office to transfer to the Special Agent in Charge, Denver Division, such jacketed and unjacketed cases which have to do with investigations in the states above mentioned and which are now under investigation by special agents of this office.¹⁷

The Wyoming cases, including the Edgerton files, no longer would be handled out of the Seattle office. Somehow, the Edgerton case files missed being shipped. Apparently, the papers sat in a file drawer for many years until they were transferred to the National Archives Seattle Branch.

In the interim, all other investigative files of the department were transferred to Washington, D. C., when the agency in April 1930 was renamed the "Bureau of Industrial Alcohol." In January 1934, the agency was transferred from Treasury to the Department of Justice where it became the "Alcoholic Beverage Unit, Division of Investigation." Four months later, portions of the reorganized agency went back into Treasury as the "Internal Revenue Alcohol Tax Unit." Eventually, its functions were absorbed, part into the Federal Bureau of Investigation and part into what became the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Department of the Treasury. The investigative files apparently were transferred along with the other agency records at each stage. What files that were not absorbed into those records apparently were destroyed—except for the wayward Edgerton file and several dozen others.¹⁸

Like the Bureau of Prohibition, the town of Edgerton's fortunes went into similar eclipse. On May 1, 1930, the *Salt Creek Gusher* reported that the "Scott block," a dance hall, cafe, market, post office and telephone exchange,—ten buildings in all—were destroyed by fire. The *Gusher* suspended publication; Stull resigned his justice of the peace office and moved away. Bootlegging, presumably, disappeared with the dramatic drop in population.

Even though the investigation came to naught, the process provides a fascinating picture of the federal investigative process carried out by the Bureau of Prohibition and how, even in the case of remote towns in one of the most lightly populated states, the agents responded to citizen complaints. The exhaustive investigation into the illegal activities supposedly taking place in Edgerton seemed to contradict Judge T. Blake Kennedy's retrospective assessment of the Bureau some 20 years later:

Even though the law would have a reasonable expectancy of enforcement under ordinary circumstances, the Prohibition Department was not by any means equal to the occasion. The enforcement agencies were not equipped with agents and employees who were skilled in the matter of preparing cases for prosecution like those who were in charge of the other classes of Federal crimes—the Post Office Department or the Treasury Department. No doubt it was very difficult to secure the proper types of men to fill the positions in the Prohibition Agencies. This added greatly to the matter of securing convictions and also to the trials and tribulations of the Judge upon the bench.¹⁹

¹⁷ Unsigned memo; letter from W. D. Smith, Denver, to Beman, Seattle, Aug. 29, 1929, acknowledged the transfer order. National Archives, Seattle Branch.

¹⁸ My thanks to Joyce Justice, National Archives, Seattle Branch, for bringing the long-lost files to my attention in the summer of 1993. After inquiries to the National Archives and to other branches, it was determined that the Edgerton file and the few others, amounting to less than two cubic feet, were all that remained of the extensive investigative files maintained by the Bureau of Prohibition, at least in the form originally used by the agency and not later interfiled with other records.

¹⁹ Unpublished memoirs, T. Blake Kennedy, vol. 1, p. 483. T. Blake Kennedy Papers, Collection #405, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

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The Question of Districting: The Legislature and the Clear Use of Power, 1992



By Matilda Hansen

*Editor's Note: This article is derived from a chapter of the author's recently published book titled *Clear Use of Power: A Slice of Wyoming Political History*, a study of political power in Wyoming. This selection focuses on a period after the last court decision struck down the legislature's reapportionment plan, ordered that Wyoming break with a century-old method of legislative selection and, instead, create single-member districts. Hansen, a veteran Albany County legislator, participated in the districting debates. Rick Miller, a featured player in this segment, now is employed as special assistant to the president of the University of Wyoming.*

Rick Miller's Challenge

Serious reapportionment began as soon as **Richard Miller**, Director of the Legislative Service Office, read the October 15, 1991 opinion in *Gorin v. Karpan*.¹ The terse opinion indicated two things: the Court wanted no more obtuse arguments justifying continued avoidance of the federal case law; and they demanded the legislature make a good faith effort to achieve equal voting strength for all Wyoming citizens.

His bosses, the Management Council, would "have had his head"² if he had done contingency planning prior to

¹*Gorin v. Karpan*, 775 F. Supp. 1430 (D. Wyo. 1991).

²From the interview with Rick Miller, April 9, 2001.

the opinion. As the top person in the LSO, it was Miller's job to make sure the legislators had the wherewithal to generate a timely districting plan that met the standards of the United States Supreme Court.

From an administrator's perspective, Miller faced his worst nightmare. It was like 'searching for needles in a haystack' because somehow from somewhere he had to pull together all the elements legislators needed to create a new constitutional reapportionment plan.³

The districting had to be done quickly, correctly—in completely uncharted Wyoming waters with an inexperienced crew. It would be an enormous task. By the time Miller got to the first of the 17 Saturdays and 17 Sundays he had a 'hold on the monster'.

Time—the ponderous process of law making can be time consuming. Reapportionment was not easy. The opinion required the new plan to be delivered to the Federal Court by close of business on Monday, February 24, 1992.

That gave the legislators and staff 132 days. Not 132 working days but 132 consecutive days: work days, Halloween, Opening of Hunting Season, Thanksgiving, Christmas, the 'down' week after Christmas, New Years, 17 Saturdays and 17 Sundays. October 15th was the first of Miller's 132 days.

Census blocks—the smallest area, for which the Census Bureau released data was where districting began. Since *Baker v. Carr*,⁴ the Census Bureau, as part of the census in 1970, 1980 and 1990, required the chief elections officer of each state, and the county clerks, to have a program to match census blocks to precincts to make voter districts—VTD's.

During those 30 years the required plan was written—then ignored. Consequently, in October 1991 no correlations between census blocks and precincts existed. Except for inadvertent congruity Rick Miller declared, "The twain of which had never met."⁵

Money—no budget was available for districting. Because the majority party planned to defend the constitutionality of the 1991 Plan, funds were provided for lawsuits but not for map drawing. Other states spent millions or hundreds of thousands of dollars preparing plans on legislative districting. But Rick Miller had no money—only a court order to produce a constitutional plan.

Consultants on Redistricting—Miller had none. There was not enough time for an RFP (Request for Proposal) to be circulated to qualified vendors should there happen to be someone out there somewhere interested in 'doing' Wyoming. Some legislatures assigned redistricting to 'special offices' or to redistricting commissions—but not Wyoming. Miller had to set up in-house districting.

Staffing—to "do" districting was not available within

the Legislative Service Office. There the assignments were already made to budgets, audits, committees and bill drafting. Each person carried a heavier than usual load because Miller was on reapportionment. He told his staff, "Unless there is a fire, don't come to me. I will answer no legislator's request. I will draft no bills. I will do nothing on State Budget matters. I will spend all my time on districting."

Equipment and office space—Rick Miller had to find it. Fortunately he was no novice to Cheyenne. During 1987 and 1988 he was on Governor Mike Sullivan's staff. Prior to 1987, himself an LSO staffer, he worked with other state agency employees—notably the number crunchers at the Department of Administration and Fiscal Control (DAFC).⁶

Miller began by looking for employees to borrow from other state agencies. His first choice was Steve Furtney. Prior to the 1990 Governor Sullivan designated him as Wyoming's Census Coordinator. Furtney was administrator of the Division of Economic Analysis in DAFC. By no stretch of anyone's imagination was Economic Analysis kin to reapportioning. Furtney had good analytical skills. He knew how to make computers spit-out information for specific purposes.

The next to be borrowed was Rick Memmel, an information technician for the Highway Department stationed in Furtney's division. Memmel was a geographic systems man. Memmel led Miller to David Clabaugh, a Highway Department map-man with expertise to make maps large enough to manipulate the data of Wyoming's 97,548 square miles and 453,588 people. He also had a roller copier at his workstation in the I-25 Highway Department Complex.

Next, Miller needed someone with specialized districting experience. The Revenue Department's sales/use tax collection/distribution districts had some similarity to the districts Miller needed. Their man-with-the-know-how to craft census blocks into precincts was Bryce Freeman. Miller wanted him.

But these four men were full-time state employees in essential positions in their respective departments. However much Miller wanted them, he couldn't just snatch

³The justices wrote in *Gorin v. Karpan*, at 1443, that "redistricting versus reapportionment is a distinction without a difference under the equal protection clause ... (because)... all citizens must be equally powerful at the ballot box." Hereafter, these terms will be used interchangeably.

⁴*Baker v. Carr*, 369 U. S. 186 (1962).

⁵Miller interview, April 9, 2001.

⁶The executive branch's Department of Administration and Fiscal Control—later to be named the Department of Administration and Information.

them away and sit them down at new desks in a new location.

As a former Sullivan staffer, he went to the Governor and asked for assistance. "I need your help. We're talking about four men. I want them assigned to me so they will be mine—for as long as I need them. I will pay their salaries, their benefits and their overtime. I will provide the workstation. I ask you to request each department head to release them to me."⁷

Sullivan wrote the letters in support of the top legislative administrator's request that four of the Governor's department heads temporarily give away key staff for an unspecified amount of time. The department heads accepted the governor's demand and Miller got his men.

Having promised workstations, Miller had to find them. With Furtney's help they found pre-session space. It was three, hard-to-find empty rooms and hall on the third floor east, at the back of the Emerson Building, converted into state offices years ago out of the former Johnson Junior High School, with public accessibility only by elevator and with no windows. During the 1992 session they moved to the offices of LSO staffers temporarily assigned to desks in the House or Senate chambers.

Furnishings were not so difficult. Miller purchased some "odds and ends". For most of what they needed he scavenged from other agencies and from the state's Surplus Property warehouse.

Computers—access to adequate capability and capacity was a challenge—even to Miller. "Nothing was easy and portable then." Intergraph was a private company with whom Miller built a contractual public/private relationship.

They were geographic information people. He borrowed, begged and legally used their equipment and software capable of manipulating the data with the capacity to draw the maps he and his four men needed. Multiple licensing agreements were made with Intergraph.⁸

When Furtney, Memmel and Freeman finished with computer map drawing, Miller had to drive the disks to David Clabaugh and his roller copier at the Highway Department offices at the Central Avenue Exit of I-25. This was the only place in Cheyenne able to print and to copy the large 32" x 24" maps.

Only legislators had access to Miller's districting setup. Each version of each plan had six pages: a statewide map for the House, a statewide map for the Senate, two town/city sheets for the House, two town/city sheets for the Senate.

Because the districting was Court ordered, Miller went to the Management Council for the authority to access funds. On January 29, 1992, he told the Council the "current allocation" for both the Joint Corporations and the

Management Council "will be exceeded" because of additional meetings.⁹ Also, before he could authorize payments from the \$50,000 in HB 295, he needed the Council's approval. The Intergraph Corporation reached their contract maximum of \$35,000. The \$40,000 for interim work of the Joint Corporations Committee was spent. Salaries, benefits, overtime, equipment rentals and photocopy exceeded \$60,000. Miller had 'slack' in both his Central Duplicating budget and the Temporary Session Staff budget, but he needed Management Council approval to make budget transfers.¹⁰

Many districting plans were drawn. Some legislators were satisfied with just learning the dynamics of combining precincts into contiguous clusters with population variations no greater than 10%.

Other legislators drew complete plans using the document that listed all the precincts in each county—its number, name and how many people lived there, according to various combinations of census blocks.¹¹ Plan-drawing legislators received multiple 32" x 24" maps on which to indicate their precinct combinations for election districts.¹²

⁷ From October 15, 1991 through March 31, 1992 Miller authorized payment of \$100,526.39 for staff salaries, overtime and logistical support. See Minutes for April 28, 1992, of the Management Council. Staff received overtime. Miller got no overtime pay—only a Joint Senate and House resolution thanking him and from the Senate, a necktie from Janice Bodine's clothing store in Evanston.

⁸ Rick Miller interview, April 9, 2001. He kept some of the Intergraph capability for training the county clerks after the Court approved the 1992 Plan. His staff did not return to their departments until each clerk, separately, was given the data on the composition of that clerk's election districts as created by the legislature.

⁹ Management Council Minutes for January 29, 1992

¹⁰ The Annual Reports of the Legislative Service Office for 1991 and 1992 contain numerous line items related to reapportionment—a total of at least \$157,777.60. Considerable effort was made to identify the expenditures on reapportionment by the Attorney General's office—including plaintiff's fees and expenses in *Gorin v. Karpan*. Other than the \$250,000 in the Mark Braden contract additional numbers were unreachable due to the accounting method used by the Auditor's Office during that biennium.

¹¹ Besides census blocks, census bureau ID numbers were used in the people-scarce parts of rural Wyoming. For instance 0001 Rural in northwest Carbon County covered 160 nearly empty square miles. A 100 square mile precinct in southeast Carbon County had 7 people.

¹² In many instances Miller and his men were able to match precincts and census blocks. However, they were not always successful.

Federal case law required election districts to be compact, contiguous and share a community of interest. The first two criteria were manageable using data from Miller's documents. The community of interest criteria was unmanageable due to the lack of comprehensive consistent, definitive, dependable statewide data.

The legislators who made multiple versions of their plans for House debate were Les Bowron, Eli Bebout, Matilda Hansen, April Brimmer-Kunz and Don Sullivan.¹³ The Senators with plans were Jim Applegate, Charlie Scott and Gary Yordy (who alone, drew up six plans). There were plans labeled Scott/Yordy melds.¹⁴

Before a plan was discussed, copies were distributed to all members as 'home work' prior to full committee consideration. Thus, for each version of each plan Miller had prepared 84 32" x 24" sheets of paper or at least 1,344 maps. There were at least two versions of every legislator's plan(s).

In 1991 copying technology was not as sophisticated as it became later in the decade. The black delineating precinct lines often were too faint to read. There was no "darkening" command on the Highway Department's roller copier to improve print clarity. Therefore, most maps needed to be retraced. Miller decided it made no sense for his computer-smart, census block-precinct enabling gurus to redraw the lines. His solution was to 'conscript' his LSO audit division people to do line retracing. Lead auditor Barbara Rogers, with Joyce Hron and Gerry Hoppsmann, set aside their auditing work to spend countless hours at large tables using smelly black grease pens drawing in the faint or missing black lines on the white pieces of paper.¹⁵

Miller wanted it easy to make comparisons among the several plans so he ordered a system of overlays—printed on transparent Mylar. But the lines on the Mylar were as unsatisfactory as the lines on the paper.

So, Barbara Rogers and her auditors, bored stiff, worked day after day doing kindergarten-level tracing with smelly pens on stinky Mylar—another 672 maps! With so many maps, the exposure to the ink and Mylar made them ill. But there would be no sick leave for this job. Miller's 132 days were dwindling. Readable maps were essential.

By October 31, 1991, Rick Miller and his men had their 'ducks in a row' when the Joint Corporations Committee met in Casper. Plaintiffs, lobbyists and interested citizens were in attendance—some of whom testified—as many reluctant legislators began yet another round of deciding on districting.

First to address the Committee was Rick Miller. "We lost the case. We have to district within the 10% range of deviation, or else have *very good* reasons to justify a

larger range. We have to forget about county boundaries. We have a lot of work to do. We have to show a 'good faith effort'. We have to seriously consider all alternatives. We have to get our new, 1992 legislative districting law down the street to the Federal Building no later than close of business on Monday, February 24, 1992. We have to be cognizant of relevant federal case law."¹⁶

He was direct. He was concise. He did not mince words. All the 1990-1991 work to reapportion the legislature was down the drain. He might have said "down a rat hole." He was gracious, but with intention and success he stated there was to be no wiggle-room or dissembling in this reapportionment—no more espousing of "regional interests" or "rational state policy". The Court had spoken: only citizens can have representation.

"Reasonable" Republicans like John DeWitt of Park, Tom Kinnison of Sheridan and Carol Jo Vlastos of Natrona were saddened about losing in Court, but they were philosophical and willing to get to work. The mineral lobbyists were anxious—but comforted—because three of their people were on this Committee: Eli Bebout of Fremont¹⁷, Bruce Hinckley of Natrona and Laramie County's April Brimmer-Kunz with mineral interests in Carbon County.

But the 'fire-brands' were 'chomping at the bit'. The Court succeeded in thwarting State Sen. Charles Scott's attempt to write new federal case law defining "regional interests" and "rational state policy". Laramie County's Rep. Gary Yordy (who held both a law degree and the M.D. degree) saw his 'state's rights' proclivities tromped on by the good Wyoming justices.

Democrats Della Herbst of Sheridan, Jim Applegate and Don Sullivan of Laramie and Matilda Hansen of Albany counties were thinking, "We told you so." They

¹³ Lawyer Les Bowron of Natrona County was not on the Joint Corporations Committee. Patti MacMillan, House Corporations chair and co-chair of the Joint Committee, did not draw a plan. She perceived her role to be manager of districting and of the committee activities.

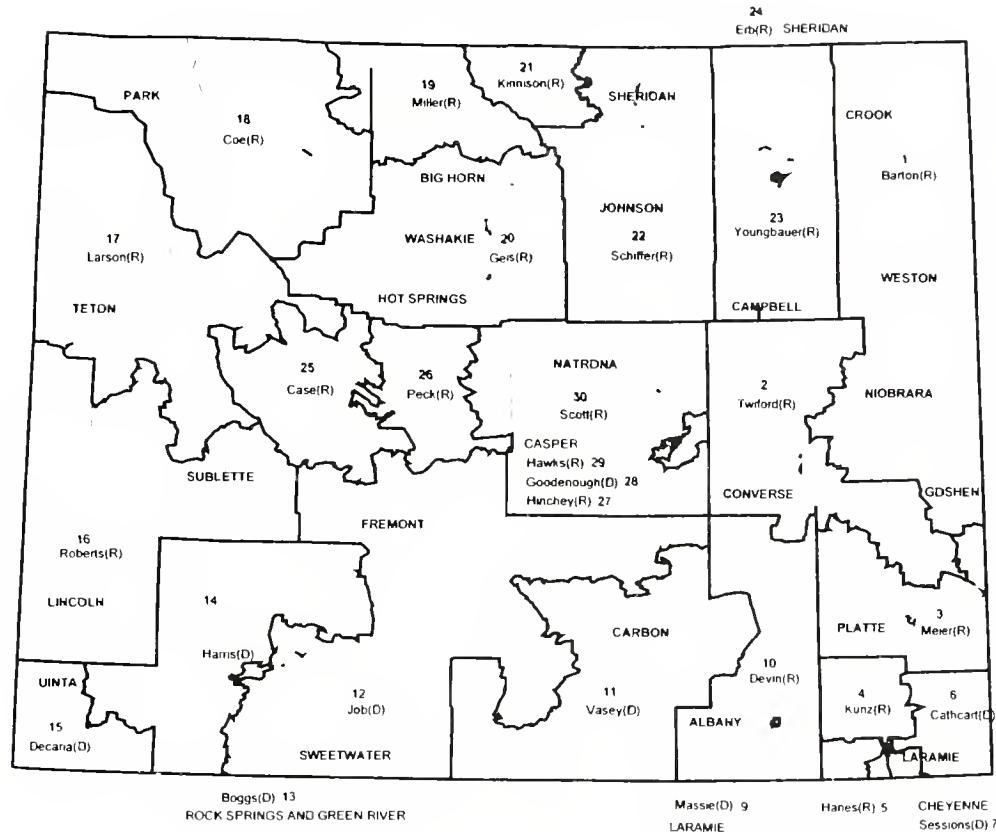
¹⁴ A meld plan combined the work of two or more legislators where election districts were taken from different plans and melded together for varying combinations of precincts and/or districts.

¹⁵ Interview with Barbara Rogers, April 18, 2001.

¹⁶ From notes and materials of the author, a member of this Joint Corporations Committee. She attended all meetings.

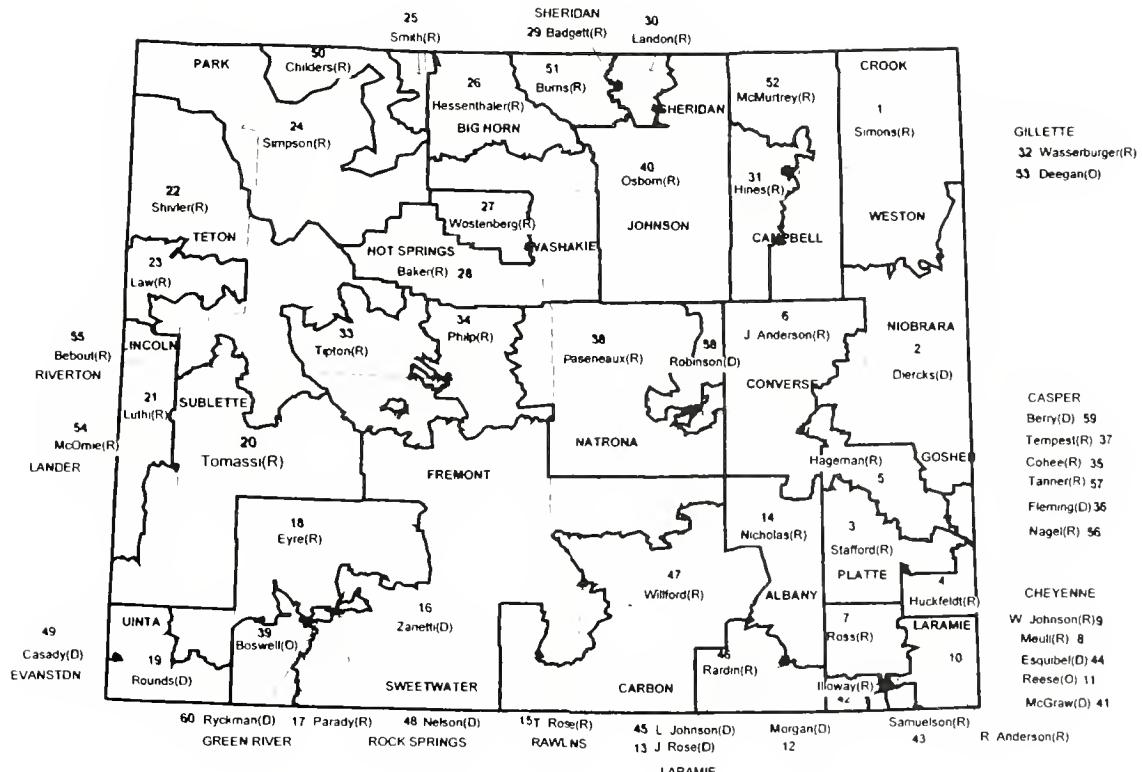
¹⁷ In October 1991, Eli Bebout was still a registered Democrat. He often voted with and usually worked closely with the Republican leadership. He was—always would be—a minerals man. After the 1994 session, he switched political parties.

SENATE DISTRICTS



The districting map, as it appeared after the legislative actions in 1992. The top map shows the Senate districts; the bottom, the House districts.

HOUSE DISTRICTS



were pleased those three Wyoming judges brought Wyoming, though kicking and screaming, into compliance with the rulings of the United States Supreme Court. Finally, the people achieved equal voting strength guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment and equal representation mandated by the Wyoming Constitution.

Each committee member made a significant time commitment to draw and to read plans—homework done on their own time. For committee meetings they were paid \$75 per diem and \$60 per day salary plus 34 cents a mile.

Drawing election districts—VTD's—according to the new rules was a major challenge. The Joint Corporations Committee set the size of the House at 60 seats, the Senate at 30 seats. Each House district had to have 7,560 people, each Senate district 15,120 people. The allowable 10% range of deviation applied to all House districts—collectively and to all Senate districts—collectively.

Miller laid out the ground rules. He gave specific directions for accessing the computer-crammed Emerson Building office. Each committee member was invited to create as many plans as each wished—then to set up appointments with Furtney, Memmel and Freeman for finalization and distribution of each plan.

Because the Census Bureau and the County Clerks did not agree on the bedrock data for reapportionment—VTD's or voting districts—Miller and his men faced the same dilemma as the 1905 and 1915 State Census Enumerators. The dilemma was finding people in Wyoming's open spaces. In 1905 and 1915 county assessors were sent to count people and economic activities. In 1991 Miller and his men counted people for representation in their legislature.

The reason the dilemma was so acute in 1991 was because, since 1864, county clerks indiscriminately drew precinct lines wherever in those open spaces they choose. Polling places were 'handy' to clusters of people—with many living far from their neighbors.

Thus the precinct political boundaries in non-urban areas were casual at best—too often non-existent. Creative license was used by the headcounters in 1905 and 1915. The 1991 headcounters also used creative license to draw the VTD's.

An example of this creativity was Wardwell Water precinct 8-3 in Natrona County comprising most of the area immediately north and east of Casper. In it no one lived in 134 census blocks, six blocks had one person each, four blocks had two people each.¹⁸ The remaining 46 census blocks contained 1,090 people—most of whom were in the outskirts of Casper.

In Fremont County, there were challenges. The pre-

cinct containing the Training School had 206 people. First, Miller's men looked east and south hoping to find more people in precinct 21-1, Reclamation. This was Sand Draw country, then along the Beaver Rim to Separation Flats and the Ferris Mountains—and they found four people at a ranch headquarters. It was still not enough people, so perusal of more and more empty census blocks—finally getting to Jeffrey City, 94 road miles from the Lander Training School.

But those 251 people (plus Atlantic City's 48) were needed in the west Albany (Rock River), north Carbon (Medicine Bow, McFadden, Shirley Basin, Hanna, Leo, west Rawlins) and east Sweetwater County House/Senate district. Drawers of plans and Miller's men had to ignore natural features whether mountain ranges or deserts, lakes or reservoirs, to keep all election districts within the allowable 10% range of deviation. For the first time in the state's history the legislature and the Court dictated to the clerks the specific boundaries of *each* precinct in each county—right down to the nitty-gritty detail of which house on which block on which side of the street went into which VTD.

According to Kathy Karpan, Secretary of State (who is the state's Chief Elections Officer), county clerks seemed to lack knowledge or understanding of the substantive elements in the court's decision in *Gorin v. Karpan*. Miller agreed. Therefore, before Christmas 1991, Karpan called the clerks to a session in Casper, with Miller as 'the program'. Near the beginning of the meeting Mary Ann Collins, the County Clerk and chief elections officer of Natrona County asked, "Why is this important to us?"

Her question hit Karpan and Miller hard because of their assumption the county clerks knew and understood the integral connection between census blocks, precincts, legislative reapportionment and the Courts. Suddenly, Karpan's meeting became a fast-paced teach-in. With Miller now in the role of teacher, he explained how the decision had turned the familiar world of Wyoming elections upside down. "The Federal Court, not you, will have the final authority over where your precinct lines are drawn," he told them.

By the end of the meeting, the county clerks understood districting. They recognized the significance of Karpan and Miller's help. And, in future days, they followed the tortured course of numerous plans through the House and Senate. When HB 117 got to the Governor, they quickly told him exactly what they thought of it.

Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act did not apply to Wyoming. Soon after the October 15 opinion, Republican leaders looked at Wyoming's minority population. The Census Bureau said Hispanics accounted for 4.8% of

the state's population dispersed in varying size clusters in every county.¹⁹ Even in Cheyenne Hispanics lived "all over town," thereby not qualifying for their own VTD.

Because Shoshone and Arapaho on the Wind River Reservation dominated clusters of small communities in Fremont County, Wyoming may have had exposure to the Voting Rights Act. At the request of Republican leaders a voter analysis was done of the precincts where, during the 1980's, Native Americans were the predominant voters. The analysis showed during that decade the reservation precincts provided the margin of victory for four of the five Fremont County House members. Thus the 'will of the majority' had not been frustrated; in fact it prevailed.²⁰ Therefore, the Voting Rights Act did not apply.

After many plans were distributed to committee members and to the public, the Joint Corporations Committee met in Casper on December 9, in Cheyenne on January 7 and 8, held a hearing in Buffalo on January 20 and a hearing in Casper on January 27. The Budget Session was to begin on Monday, February 17—just seven days before the Governor-approved plan had to be down the street in the Federal Building. The Management Council requested a Special Session—to begin Monday, February 10.

But before the Management Council agreed to a Special Session, they considered doing districting during the Budget Session with 'mirror' bills considered at the same time in each chamber. This was Fred Harrison's motion with Ron Micheli's second. Because mirror bills gave conference committees enormous power, mirror-districting bills provided considerable latitude for mischief in drawing district lines.²¹ This idea was defeated with only Harrison, Micheli and Eli Bebout voting "aye."

Prior to this January 29th Management Council meeting, Miller and his men foresaw a potential logistics nightmare--serious enough to doom districting in 1992. "...even with computers, developing new plans and amendments was very time consuming. It will be physically impos-

sible for us to analyze a new plan and prepare it as an amendment if it is submitted when the Session is under way."²²

Upon Deimer True's motion and Bebout's second, Speaker Cross, as chair of Management Council, was directed to write each legislator, "...any new plan or major amendment submitted to the Legislative Service Office after 5 p.m., on Thursday, February 6 will not be processed in time for the Special Session."

Then Management Council requested the Joint Rules be changed: "...no reapportionment amendment will be considered unless it is submitted to the Legislative Service Office by 4 p.m., on the day before debate."²³

Thus was catastrophe averted.

Rick Miller, Steve Furtney, Rick Memmel, David Clabaugh, Bryce Freeman and the 14 members of the Joint Corporations Committee spent 117 of the 132 days in preliminary work on Wyoming's first foray into districting. The calendar moved to February 10th. Roll was called for the Special Session. It was time to listen to the Governor....

¹⁸ The usual census block contained about 70 people—give or take a few.

¹⁹ Rounded up to the nearest whole number, 5%, Hispanics qualified for one delegate at the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

²⁰ Frustration of the will of a minority group was the major criteria to ascertain potential application of the Voting Rights Act. The 'majority' in Fremont County in the 1980's was of BOTH Native American and non-Native American voters. The Republican's interpretation for the 1992 Plan bordered on the nonsequitur. Some might call it 'slippery'.

²¹ Mirror bills work for appropriations where the issue is specified amounts of money. Conference committees accept one version or another, or they split the difference.

²² January 29, 1992 Minutes of the Management Council

²³ In this context, Legislative Service Office means Miller and his workers.



Howard Hays collection, American Heritage Center

Rustic Roosevelt Lodge

By Tamson Emerson Hert

A stop at Camp Roosevelt will not appeal to everybody. It is well to understand that there are no rooms with bath, or other service elements of an elegant or luxurious nature. It is well to know, also, that there is little opportunity for "dressing up" and formal entertainment. Camp Roosevelt is a comfortable western camp surrounded by a wilderness. Its primary appeal is to visitors who delight in (or who need) foot trails, saddlehorse trails, trout fishing, exploration, nature study or relaxation.¹

Tucked away in the northeastern corner of Yellowstone National Park stands Roosevelt Lodge. Constructed in 1919 and opened the next year, it is one of the few "original" lodges remaining in the park.

William Wallace Wylie initiated camping tours through "Wonderland" in 1892 using portable equipment. From then until 1905, he was a Park fixture. In 1896 Wylie was granted a long-term lease and established four permanent camps at points of interest around the Grand Loop. His camping tours provided a less expensive alternative to the hotel system. By 1898 the Wylie Camping Company had camps at Apollinaris Spring, Upper Geyser Basin, Lake Outlet and Grand Canyon, with lunch stations near Norris and Thumb. The success of Wylie's permanent camps did not set well with the Northern Pacific Railroad or with Harry Child, owner of the hotel and transportation companies.

"Wylie constantly irritated the wealthy and snobbish Child because the tourists who used his camps were a different sort, not at all like those who stayed at the posh hotels; his guests paid low prices for Spartan accommodations and dust-plagued stagecoach tours."²

Ed Moorman, long-time employee of the Camping Company, recalled that business at the Wylie camps was very slow in 1904, but:

The hotels, however, did a good business that year....The railroads, too, made discriminating rates against the Camping Company. If I recall correctly, a round-trip ticket could be purchased to Gardiner including stage and hotel accommodations at a good saving as against buying a rail ticket to Gardiner only and then buying locally the ticket for the Camps tour of the Park. It was this problem that led W. W. Wylie to go to Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1905 to appear before the Interstate Commerce Commission, in the hope to have this discrimination discontinued.³

¹ *Yellowstone Vacations Camp Roosevelt*. (Chicago: Poole Brothers, 1923).

² Mark Barringer, "When Harry Got Taken: The Early Days of the Yellowstone Camps," *Annals of Wyoming* 69 (Fall, 1997), 4.

³ E. H. Moorman, Manuscript, Hays Collection #3151, Box 6. Moorman Manuscript folder, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

The discrimination did end, but following this victory over the Northern Pacific, Wylie sold the camping company to H. W. Child and A. W. Miles. Under their management, the Wylie Permanent Camping Company became even more successful.

Miles expanded the business in 1906 by adding two new camps: Camp Roosevelt near Tower Falls and a camp at Swan Lake Flat, south of Mammoth Hot Springs. With the completion of the Union Pacific/Oregon Short Line branch to West Yellowstone in 1908, an additional camp was established at Riverside. A record number of visitors, 5,024, toured the Park via Wylie Camps in 1909.⁴

Several others were interested in providing camping tours through Yellowstone during this period. One company, Shaw and Powell, obtained a lease for permanent camps.

The National Park Service was established in 1916 as a new agency under the Department of the Interior. The first director, Stephen A. Mather, and his assistant, Horace Albright, had charge of all business endeavors in the national parks. They sought to consolidate the various Yellowstone concessions. "They believed that the competition among franchisees was detrimental to the traveling public and that monopolies for each major facet of the operation—hotels, transportation, and camping—would simplify administration and increase visitation."⁵

As a result of the restructuring, Child maintained ownership of both the hotel and transportation companies

while F. J. Haynes continued operating the photographic franchise. A. W. Miles and J. D. Powell, owners of the two major camping companies, joined together to form the Yellowstone Park Camping Company.⁶

Ed Moorman recalled this episode in Park history:

Many of the former operators were not pleased with the new set-up, but in reality it was very good for the tourists as they were free from the annoyance of being solicited by many outfits if they had not heretofore purchased their Park tickets elsewhere.⁷

With the onset of World War I, railroads were no longer allowed to transport excursion trains. This limited visitation to Yellowstone. All hotels were closed and, while the camps remained open, they lost money. After undergoing these hardships, Miles and Powell sold the Yellowstone Park Camping Company to Howard Hays in 1919.

Hays rebuilt the camp operation by constructing more substantial facilities and promoting the "camps way" in Yellowstone. He started by changing the name of the company to the Yellowstone Park Camps Company. In the fall of 1919, his firm began construction of a rustic lodge at Camp Roosevelt.

⁴ Barringer.

⁵ Barringer, 7.

⁶ For additional details, see Barringer and Moorman.

⁷ Moorman, 16.



Row of cottages at Camp Roosevelt.

Yellowstone Park Company series, H. H. Hays collection, American Heritage Center

The site was established as a camp in 1906 to commemorate the 1903 Yellowstone visit by President Theodore Roosevelt. The 1907 Wylie Permanent Camping Company announced: "The New Roosevelt Camp Trio":

Camp Roosevelt is the most perfectly ideal location for a camp in the Park...A beautiful little meadow with majestic fir trees encircling it on three sides and a grove of quaking-aspen screening it from the road on the fourth, a crystal, ice-cold mountain stream coming from the forest and skirting one side of the meadow:...and a most superb view of the serried and crags of the Absarokas on the East and Northeast; surely Nature has done everything possible to make this a perfect spot to enjoy outdoor life.⁸

Frederick Dumont Smith, in his *Book of a Hundred Bears*, wrote: "We reached Camp Roosevelt in time for a late lunch. The camp is set in a charming grove, with tent houses and tents for cooking and dining."⁹

Camp Roosevelt was chosen as the site for the first lodge building in a new system of accommodations designed to meet the needs of automobile tourists. Albright, then superintendent of Yellowstone, was pleased with the idea of a new lodge system, believing that the rustic log construction would provide a "dude ranch appearance."¹⁰

Construction of the lodge began in the fall of 1919, but it was not completed until the following spring. The dimensions of the one-story log building were about 90 feet by 50 feet with the "L" extension of 29 feet by 59

feet. The exterior log walls were unpeeled and saddle-notched. The front porch, constructed of matched and dressed pine flooring atop log joints, originally wrapped around the southeast corner of the building. (This is apparent from a Haynes postcard).¹¹ The extension was removed about 1947.

The lodge interior was designed to provide a lounge and dining area for campers. Features of the room included two stone fireplaces with concrete hearths and log mantels and a log rail, 25 feet long, separating the lounge from the dining area. The furnishings were of a rustic design and included "a eleven-inch diameter enameled-iron drinking fountain, a Bradford upright Grand piano, pine tables, a "rustic" hat rack, log settees with loose cushions, 110 maple folding chairs, and assorted bookcases."¹²

The dining room was furnished with 14 pine tables of various sizes, pine serving stands, 93 black and yellow dining chairs with bar backs and cone seats. Both areas

⁸ Wyle Permanent Camping Company, *Yellowstone National Park* (Chicago: Poole Brothers, 1907), 21.

⁹ Frederick Dumont Smith, *Book of a Hundred Bears* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1909), 197.

¹⁰ James Mote and Berle Clemensen, *Historic Structures Report*, Historical Data Sections. Lake Hotel, Lake Lodge, Roosevelt Lodge, Old Faithful Lodge, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming. (Denver: Denver Service Center, Historic Preservation Branch, National Park Service, U. S. Dept. of Interior, 1981), 77.

¹¹ For instance, see Haynes postcard #27468.

¹² James R. McDonald Architects, *Roosevelt Lodge Yellowstone National Park*, Historic Structures Report. (Missoula: 1993), 15.



had striped linen curtains hung on wrought-iron rods and hangars. A framed print portrait of Theodore Roosevelt hung over the mantel of the lounge.¹³

From 1921-1923, Camp Roosevelt served as the headquarters for the Yellowstone Park Forest and Trail Camp. Serving as director was Prof. Alvin G. Whitney from the Roosevelt Wild Life Forest Experiment Station, New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse. The camp's purpose was stated in a 1921 publication:

The Forest and Trail Camp is a summer nature school designed for boys between twelve and eighteen years. Its basic principle is that of character-building through the hardy pastimes of woods and trail, through self-discipline, and through helpfulness in a cultured camp community....

The celebrated wonders of the Yellowstone, with its geysers and hot springs, its vast forests and mighty canyons, as well as those other varied recreational interests—the herds of big "game," the marvelous trout fishing, the scenic trail trips afoot or on horseback, and for the more adventurous the climbing and exploring among remote lakes and mountain gardens—appeal alike to all who visit the great Park; but it is to the growing boy that they are most fascinating.¹⁴

The Camp headquarters or council building was built one quarter mile from Roosevelt Lodge. Meals were provided at the Lodge. Ed Moorman recalled building a small swimming pool for the Camp along with an "assembly house" in 1920.¹⁵ Whitney charged \$500 for the nearly six-week long camp, but Moorman mentions that Whitney brought out a number of boys, but not enough to pay the Company for the operating expenses. He estimated that the company lost \$4,000 on the venture.

Howard Hays, president of the Yellowstone Park Camps Company, continued to promote Camp Roosevelt. In 1923 a brochure titled "Yellowstone Vacations, Camp Roosevelt," was published. Many of the tours offered by the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company passed by the Roosevelt area, but the overnight stay there was not included in the cost of the tour:

In General

A stop at Camp Roosevelt is not included in the standard four and one-half days' sightseeing tour of Yellowstone Park....Many travelers who are using the regular service of the Yellowstone permanent summer camps, or the Yellowstone hotels, go to Camp Roosevelt for an extra day or an extra week in the Park. Almost all regular tours pass the camp, thereby eliminating any extra transportation charges; on the three regular tours which do not pass the camp, the side-trip to Camp Roosevelt is made for an extra transportation charge of five dollars.¹⁶

In 1924 Child, the owner of the boat, hotel and transportation companies, acquired the camps. Again, the name was changed, this time to Yellowstone Park Lodge and Camps Company. Cabins were added to the Roosevelt Lodge area under the oversight of Vernon Goodwin. Use of the camps and lodges increased and more Americans drove their automobiles to and through the park.

Because of the Great Depression, no services were provided at Camp Roosevelt in 1932-33. The camp was closed again from 1943-46 because of the labor shortage brought about by World War II. After inspection by the U. S. Public Health Service in 1947, it was determined that Roosevelt Lodge needed a new kitchen. The camp remained closed.

W. M. Nichols, the president of the Yellowstone Park Company,¹⁷ proposed abandoning the Roosevelt area and relocating all assets to Fishing Bridge. Camp Roosevelt never had been profitable and the Fishing Bridge area needed additional accommodations. After consideration, however, the kitchen was upgraded and the lodge remodeled.¹⁸ Few modifications were made to the Lodge although cabins continued to be relocated there from other parts of the park.

From 16 permanent camps operated by the Wylie Permanent Camping Company and the Shaw and Powell Camping Company in 1913, three "rustic" lodges operate there today. Roosevelt Lodge remains the most casual and rustic lodge in the Park and it still offers the scenic vistas and western experience valued by the traveler in an earlier, less harried era.

¹³ Haynes postcard #22740.

¹⁴ *Yellowstone Park Forest and Trail Camp for Boys and Young Men.* (New York: Merrill Press, 1921), 191.

¹⁵ Moorman, 18.

¹⁶ Yellowstone Parks Camps Company, *Yellowstone Vacations, Camp Roosevelt* (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1923).

¹⁷ All of Child's properties, the Yellowstone Park Hotel Company, the Yellowstone Park Transportation Company, the Yellowstone Park Boat Company, and the Yellowstone Park Lodges and Camps Company, were merged in 1936 into the Yellowstone Park Company.

¹⁸ McDonald, 31.

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T. A. Larson, Wyoming Historian

A 1998 Interview by Eric Nye



Dr. Larson was a founding member and early officer of the Wyoming State Historical Society. He is shown here, second from right, along with the other society officers in 1955: Dr. Dewitt Dominick, Maurine Carley, Frank Bowron, W. L. Marion, Larson, and Lola M. Homsher.

*University of Wyoming English professor Dr. Eric Nye interviewed noted Wyoming historian T. A. Larson in the summer of 1998 while Nye was preparing materials for the statewide "book" project. Following Dr. Larson's death in January, 2001, Dr. Nye submitted this interview to *Annals*.*

Nye: *What sort of role does the historian have in the world of literature? Why should the writing of history be considered one of the branches of literature?*

Larson: Well, I should think anything written down has claim to belonging to literature, but it all depends on what it amounts to, whether it's gibberish and junk or quality fine stuff. The fact that it's historical in an attempt to put down thinks that actually happened doesn't give it any claim to being literature. It all hinges on the quality of the product.

Nye: *Who are the greatest writers of history, the ones who most influenced you?*

Larson: I never had a good teacher, and therefore I'm

not nearly as good a writer as I would have been if I'd had someone like what's his name on the log pointing out things to me. In fact, when my smaller book on Wyoming history appeared, the general editor of that came around and visited with me, and he pointed out some things that someone should have pointed out to me when I was beginning to write. No one ever told me about the lead sentence and last sentence being so all-important, for example, or having a paragraph dealing with one subject, and things like that. I was never told things like that that are obvious after they're pointed out to you. So, as often happens, some things in that book are not mine because he claimed the right to rewrite this or that. Also, as I explain in one of my articles, how well you write depends partly on the sources you're using. In writing my Wyoming history many of the sources--I wasn't reading things that had claims to being literary, so that my writing deteriorated. I wrote more formally at any rate with a better vocabulary in my doctoral dissertation than I did in subsequent years. You just can't avoid becoming colloquial and using terms that everybody else is using. I've always felt that I don't have the

literary ability that I should have. I had a pretty good English teacher as a freshman at the University of Colorado. She had a large class and didn't deal particularly with individuals. I didn't get enough practice in writing. What essays I wrote for her—and I think it probably happens up here at UW, too—were not torn apart. Not to correct spelling—I was a terrific speller, so that she never corrected any spelling. When I was in the sixth grade back in Wakefield [Nebraska] I was the best speller in four states. I spelled down the seventh and eighth graders at a contest in Sioux City, Iowa. That was partly because I had a good short term memory. They started out at least with a speller, and my teacher was one who just drilled the hell out of us. So that if you mentioned a word for me to spell, I could tell you what the next ten words were. Later in the state contest I think I came out second or something when they weren't using the speller. But anything in the speller, why I could mow them down.

Nye: That same aptitude is a real advantage for the historian who is trying to organize his sources, I suppose.

Larson: But it was the same way in writing exams. My first year at Boulder, I had the highest grade average in the freshman class. I could read the assignments, you know, and a few weeks later have them very well in mind. Ask me a year or two later, why, I wouldn't do nearly as well. Well, at any rate, that caused me to think that I had to excel. I was driven to doing my assignments and was able to get a tuition scholarship to Boulder. Well at any rate, I just wasn't born with that ability and I wasn't trained very well to be a good writer. Dealing with the sources I used, why, I got into using colloquialisms and so on. Even such a thing as the length of sentences. . . obvious.

Nye: So, would you say it's true that most historians are shaped by the material they study?

Larson: True. I was going to be a medievalist, but there were no jobs. So I moved into this by necessity. I finished in four years.

Nye: You arrived at the University of Wyoming in 1936 and were transformed into a western historian, something you had some pressure on you to do. Grace Raymond Hebard set a course requirement in Wyoming history, and the course as yet had no one to teach it. Yet it was a need, whether or not it was required of the students. Wyoming needed its historians. How did your commitment to Wyoming history develop from that point on?

Larson: I committed myself to developing a course in Wyoming history to pick up where Hebard had left off.

Velma Linford was a teacher at Laramie High. She finished a masters with me in 1946 and helped decide that there should be a course in that subject at the university. I got tenure before I went off to the navy in 1943. Students were disappearing. In January there were only about 400 students left in the university. Nussbaum and White were here. A friend of mine in Boulder recruited me to go to an air navigation school down in Florida. I signed up and took a commission in the navy and thought I'd become an air navigator. Well, it turned out I did well in the navigation school and they put me to work teaching navigation at the Delmonte preflight school out in California. Then when that closed down they put me to work in other navy facilities. I was out on a shakedown cruise because they felt that people working in the service schools command at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center ought to know something about the sea. So I was sent aboard a destroyer escort. As it turned out I got a ribbon for having served in the Atlantic theater. People on shakedown cruises ordinarily served only for 29 days, but as we were leaving New York harbor, the engine broke down and we sat there for a couple of days, so when the cruise ended I had 31 days aboard ship in the Atlantic.

Nye: Did you have any temptation to stay in the military after the war or did you know you wanted to come back to Wyoming?

Larson: I decided I wouldn't even stay in the reserve. Things were changing so fast that even in the field of navigation where I had some expertise, there were automations, so I couldn't do much good as a navigator. I used what they called an octant then, like a sextant, to measure the altitude of the stars from the horizon, but that became obsolete by the end of the war. When I went off to the navy Laura White told me that I should be thinking during my duty about writing a history of Wyoming's war years when I got back. So I practically had instruction from her to plan on doing that. That's my first book afterwards.

Nye: What is the role of historians in the culture of writers and literary figures? What are some hints for the writing of history?

Larson: The most important thing, in contrast to Hebard, is not to start out with set ideas that you want to supplement. She knew what she wanted to prove, and she would ignore anything else. Get the facts, get the best sources, and then put them together to tell the story. Make it readable. Tell an entertaining story and have it accurate. There's a new book on Hitler that revises things. You think of all the people who have written about WWII

and about Hitler, and then you find that many of them have been mistaken when they interviewed Hitler and didn't pursue certain aspects of it. Here's a revisionist who shows what happened. You write a story and then others come along who find fault with what you did, disprove what you did. You've got to be very accurate and try to exhaust the sources. That takes a lot of time, and that's one difficulty that I had here in writing. Teaching sometimes nine or twelve hours I had to spend weekends and neglect my family in order to get writing done. I scarcely ever read fiction during that period for enjoyment. I like to read fiction, but I felt that I was neglecting my responsibilities to my profession in reading things for fun.

Nye: But you must have been a voracious reader as a younger boy in school and college. What were some of the books that you enjoyed most as a boy?

Larson: One book when I was in high school was the *Royal Road to Romance* [by Richard Halliburton]. I was editor of the high school newspaper, and that suggested to me that I ought to try to be a journalist. When I went to Boulder they were supposed to have a pretty good journalism school, but they didn't have any work at the freshman level. I never met an advisor in the journalism department. I had a freshman history course, however, under a great salesman. I was his best student, and he was recruiting people for his department. He told me, "What you ought to do is learn something and then get out and write." If the journalists had gotten me, I'd probably have become an editor in a small-town newspaper since that's what they were teaching people to become. Some of them would get jobs as a stringer in Denver or somewhere if they were pretty good.

Nye: But you've become the dean of Wyoming historians. That seems a much better road to have gone down, doesn't it.

Larson: Well it turned out to be a better profession than journalism for me.

Nye: Tell us about the field work you did for your research on Wyoming. So often people consider professors as having horizons limited to Laramie, yet clearly you're involved with the whole state.

Larson: That's right. I had to interview some of the older people, retired governors and people like that. But I did something that some people would probably sniff at. In order to find out what really bothered people in Wyoming, since there weren't accurate accounts, I got the Board of Trustees to provide money for assistantships. So I got half a dozen students to run through a bunch of

newspapers all over the state for particular years on particular subjects. And that way I got some idea what concerned the people of Casper, for example, in the 1870s. There's no other way to get that since I couldn't read all the newspapers myself. Newspapers are not considered first-rate sources, but they do give you a feel for what people were thinking and what they were arguing about. So I was able to develop certain themes that you couldn't have arrived at any other way. These students took notes on different subjects and I read their notes which were copied from newspaper editorials and so on.

Nye: Did you talk to any of the oldtimers or homesteaders?

Larson: Yes, I went to the records office in Denver for filings on land to find out about homesteaders.

Nye: Did you feel like you had a circle of colleagues at other universities? Who was your audience?

Larson: In some cases I would read papers at meetings like the Western History Association. They get together every year. I read other state histories to see what subjects they covered. I was one of the organizers of the Wyoming State Historical Society. There was a woman, Lola Homsher, who was working in the state historical department in Cheyenne. She was really the instigator of the state organization around 1951 when we had a meeting up in Casper to organize it. Some counties had historical societies already. We organized one here in Albany County in the 1930s. The women's club here had started a small museum. They got the idea of buying the Ivinston Mansion. Alice Stevens was a fast writer—a pretty good journalist—who wrote historical articles in the local papers. She was determined to find a place for the historical artifacts that the women's club had collected and kept in the basement of city hall. Then they were in the basement of the court house. She raised money to buy the Ivinston Mansion. I was her secretary, so I had to do a lot of legwork.

Nye: It's always amazing to me that a state as young as Wyoming has such a sense of responsibility for its own history. The people who live here and came here very recently are still concerned to want to go to these lengths to preserve it. In some ways we are even more committed to our history in a state like this than in older and larger states.

Larson: That's absolutely true. Nebraska doesn't pay nearly as much attention to its history as Wyoming. In fact I don't think any state pays as much attention to its history as Wyoming. We're closer to it. It doesn't go back as far. It's not so complex. There are certain spe-

cific themes. State history doesn't usually have such credibility or passionate approval.

Nye: *Of course there are lots of popular representations of the myth of Wyoming that as an historian I suppose you felt you were conspiring both with and against.*

Larson: I tried to do it the way national historians did in other states, to fit the Wyoming part into the national picture. But I had to spend too much time destroying myths. We got the idea very early thanks to Hebard that Esther Morris instead of Susan B. Anthony founded the women's rights movement. And so Wyoming, in spite of my best efforts, managed to put her in Washington as Wyoming's outstanding citizen. The other was Sacajawea. Children now learn at their mothers' knee that this Indian woman from the Lewis & Clark expedition died up on the Wind River Reservation, but in fact when you run it down you find she died in 1811 back in South Dakota. And just the other day our U. S. Senator had an article up in the Gillette paper saying he wanted to put the Indian woman who died in South Dakota on our state quarter. There's a national commission of historic sites, and for ten years I was chairman of the commission in Cheyenne. We put people to work writing the history of various historic sites and we would correct them as best we could and send them into Washington to get approval prior to listing with the Secretary of the Interior. And South Dakota managed to get it established that her grave is there and not up here on the reservation. I've spent too much damn time fighting those battles about Esther Morris and Sacajawea because I don't want people in other parts of the country laughing at us.

Nye: *Do you have any reflections about Wyoming's literary heritage?*

Larson: So many authors settled out here, lived in the Jackson Hole area or other attractive places. So in various Wyoming cities good writers establish themselves and make a living from their writing. And there were good writers who grew up here and left and made their reputations elsewhere, too. Dee Linford, for example, who wrote *Man without a Star*. And Ted Olson who wrote *Ranch on the Laramie*. In the last part of my *History of Wyoming* I review some of these. Owen Wister is certainly one of the leading figures. Good books come out of the university, too, poets and the like.

Nye: *If you imagine the state as a road map, do you feel like you're identified with the whole state of Wyoming or with the part of it here in Laramie? Do you feel that anywhere you travel in the state, you'll have friends you*

can look up, that you can always go down to the next ranch down the road and find somebody?

Larson: Yes. The legislature gave me more connections, I suppose, with the whole state, because all parts of the state were well represented. I spent eight years in the legislature, and that introduced me to various Wyoming problems, too, and solutions for them. But many of those people are dead now.

Nye: *Where is Wyoming going to get its next generation of historians?*

Larson: Well, they're just going to have to do what they do in the other humanities here. They're just not going to have full staffing. Right now the university's shrinking some. What they're doing, as you know, is not filling the places vacated by retirement. This guy Phil Roberts, he's well-prepared to teach Wyoming history, and he's published some of it. I thought when he came, here's a guy who knows a lot about it and will be happy here. Otherwise when you hire somebody for Wyoming history, why, you get someone who has another specialty.

Nye: *Like you were when you came! Is it conceivable that many of the functions of the professional historian now have been distributed to various other agencies like the museums, libraries, and other places?*

Larson: That's right. It has its advantages. You get pretty well-trained people into jobs that probably would be filled by people not so well equipped. In the library for example, historians can be of considerable help advising students who go to them.

Nye: *Can you comment on the difference between Wyoming and other states in the west?*

Larson: There are great differences. Economics determines all these things. Other states are beginning to suffer what Charlie Stebner coined a word to describe as "popullution," cultural differences that come from having large bodies of people in one place—the crime, commercialism. You don't feel safe on the streets even. Here you don't have to lock your doors and things like that. I haven't had to until recently. Now they're getting some crime in Casper, Cheyenne, and even in Laramie. Women get attacked on campus even. Even though the state is not flourishing, some of these things seep in. Wyoming is the least industrialized state in the Union. And they try to build on tourism: that's where their big business is. But what kind of business is that? People who work in the tourist business, who work in hot food places and so on get six, seven dollars, minimum wage. Those are not good jobs. Talk about not being able to keep people in Wyoming. There just aren't the jobs here.

Unless they go into their parents' business or something. And the state just appointed a new commission to attract people to Wyoming. Half the people in the state say, To hell with that! Go up to someone like the barber in Lander or somewhere and ask him about people coming in, and he'll say, "There are too dang many people now!" There's that attitude.

Nye: *What kind of best scenario can you dream up for Wyoming's future?*

Larson: We've got to provide an entertainment place partly and try to improve the quality of entertainment that we can provide. Tourist business has to be a principal one. Now they're wrecking Yellowstone because there are too many people up there. It'll cost you \$130 a night to stay at Jackson Lake Lodge. And you have to pay cash on the barrelhead six weeks before you get there, that is around the middle of the season. Star Valley, that's an overflow area. For a while they were having to haul people to work in tourist business in Jackson and down to Star Valley just for a place they can live. People living in tents around Jackson. We went there on the Fourth of July to Jackson, and it was so damn packed. You'd just get stuck for long periods of time in the streets, cars every which way, every parking place taken, can't get in to any restaurants.

Nye: *And yet there are places in Europe—think of Switzerland that has the same kind of beauty, the same kind of pressures but they don't seem to handle it as badly. When you visit Switzerland or somewhere, you don't feel like you're in a parking lot. So tourism, but with a certain sense of quality about it.*

Larson: And there's falseness, too, trying to make a tourist place out of an old prison. My God—the only advantage of that, from my point of view, is that it enables the University to get off the hook and divide this other property down there. They hadn't been able to unload that on the community and get a special penny. They're never gonna pay for the damn thing. They'd rather have people volunteering to tell a false story, really, about what went on there.

Nye: *Now could that kind of thing be managed better, or is it a hopeless pursuit from the beginning? Do you think it's the wrong kind of development?*

Larson: I think if you want to try to depict what life was like in a nineteenth century penitentiary, you'd do better in Rawlins. In fact, they made a movie up there and built an entrance to it and the hole where they put people, and the cells. They've got a lot of old cells. They've only got a couple of cells here, fake cells. Don't try to

present a penitentiary like that. But the entertainment they provide! People love it. They stay in hotels in Laramie, and they don't spend as much time in Wyoming. They just head for Jackson and Yellowstone. They're overpopulating that place. The wealthy people buy up the riverbanks and build their fine homes in places like Lander and Dubois. Dubois is a better example. The value of land goes out of sight. It's getting to be that way in Star Valley. They want to have a piece of the wilderness. Building up along the mountainsides there.

Nye: *You know I thought of that a couple years ago at Thanksgiving when we came down from the Snowies. We'd been out cutting our Christmas tree. We were pulling up at the Old Corral in Centennial, and some hot shot city dude got into a bright yellow helicopter and took off on his way back to Denver at the end of the weekend to catch his plane back to Houston or Manhattan or somewhere like that. Amazing that somebody would spend all that money to come out here. There has to be some way to manage that, to see that Wyoming changes it and not let it change Wyoming.*

Larson: They're wrecking Jackson Hole that way. Around Jenny Lake you have to walk about three blocks to get to the bridge over the stream.

Nye: *What is missing here? Is it a sense of reverence for the natural? Is it acquisitiveness or possessiveness that's causing these problems?*

Larson: Well, I worked in Yellowstone four summers. It gave me a false impression of Wyoming. That was the Wyoming I knew. It was a wonderful place in those days when there were 275,000 people a year. Now there are over probably 3 million. The people who get there for the first time, you can't blame them, they'll stop in the middle of the road if they see a bear or an elk or a moose. Bison are very dangerous. These people go out to try to have a picture taken alongside a bison, and they get gored. They've talked about a monorail running around and making people park their cars at the entrance.

Nye: *Can any good come of all this influx of people for the state?*

Larson: You just have to try to keep the minimum population here and not insist on getting poorly paid businesses.

CROSSING THE NORTH PLATTE RIVER: A BRIEF HISTORY OF “RESHAW’S” BRIDGE – 1852-1866

By Jefferson Glass

The North Platte River was one of the most dangerous obstacles facing the pioneers of the westward migration of the nineteenth century. Prior to the age of modern dams and flood control the river became a raging torrent during the spring and summer months as millions of acre-feet of water rapidly accumulated from its many tributaries as the great depths of snow of the northern Rocky Mountains began their annual melt. It was not uncommon for this gradually descending river to gain ten feet in depth and miles in width during this annual runoff.

The earliest of western adventurers often constructed bullboats to navigate the unpredictable river during high water.¹ As the fur and buffalo robe industry grew, larger boats were needed to transport the huge packs of hides to market. It then became a common practice among the traders to tackle the much larger task of constructing Mackinaws in the vicinity of their trading posts and floating their goods downstream to market during this high-water season.² Since neither of these forms of navigation were practical to the immigrants and the North Platte River was not often fordable, finding another method of crossing the river became a necessity.

When the Latter Day Saints left Winter Quarters to begin their westward journey in 1847 they brought with them a leather boat, the *Revenue Cutter*, to aid in their crossing of the river. When leaving Fort Laramie, Brigham Young split the battalion into two segments. The first smaller group traveled ahead with the boat to establish a crossing of the North Platte.³ The ferry site that they chose was directly across the river from the mouth of Cannon Creek. (Cannon Creek is now called Casper Creek and this location is about one mile downstream from the later location of Guinard’s Bridge [1860-1867]

and Fort Caspar [1865-1867] in present day Casper). The following day the second battalion arrived at the point on the Platte where the first battalion was ferrying a party of emigrants across the river with the *Revenue Cutter*. Here the Mormons were exercising their own

¹ A bullboat was a makeshift skiff constructed by stretching raw buffalo hides over a frame of bent branches. The seams of the hides would then be sealed with glue made from boiling down the bones of the same buffalo that had supplied the hides. By 1824 this was a common practice. John Myers Myers, *The Saga of Hugh Glass – Pirate, Pawnee, and Mountain Man*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 179-180.

² Mackinaws were flat-bottomed boats that could be built on site to carry cargo down river during high water. A large Mackinaw boat could carry up to three hundred packs of buffalo robes, ten robes to the pack. Judge Eli S. Ricker, *Interview of Magloire Alexis Mosseau, Buzzard Basin, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota, October 30, 1906*, (Unpublished Notebooks, Nebraska State Historical Society Library, Lincoln, Nebraska), tablet 28, p. 6-8.

³ Dale L. Morgan, “The Mormon Ferry on the North Platte: the Journal of William A. Empey”, *Annals of Wyoming*, (May 7-August 4, 1847), vol. 21, no.2, p. 130-132. Tom Empey, the great-grandson of William A. Empey, is a resident of Casper. A few years ago, he constructed a replica ferry, built to specifications, that is on display at Fort Caspar Museum.

ingenuity in supplementing the church coffer, while waiting for their own company's arrival.⁴

Seeing the potential income for his church and the convenience of the ferry for future emigration of his own flock, Brigham Young decided to establish a genuine ferry at this location. He ordered that two ferry boats, or rafts, be constructed from the timber of the *Black Hills* to the south, now known as Casper Mountain. Several dugout canoes were built and then lashed together with timbers to form something like a deck. Many ferries over the years were constructed by this method and used throughout the west at various river crossings.⁵

Shortly after the Mormon Ferry began operation, the Hill Ferry, a private company, began operating down stream. Feeling the loss of business, the Mormons asked Hill if he was interested in a partnership. Hill flatly refused. Not wishing to lose any more business, the Mormons packed up their equipment and floated down river to a new location below Hill's operation. A few days later the Mormon's witnessed the remains of Hill's ferry floating down the river. He had given up the contest, but destroyed his ferry to keep anyone else from profiting from his labors. After several weeks at their new location, the waters of the Platte subsided and business slowed drastically as the river became fordable. The men moved back to their first location and waited for the last Mormon wagon train, which they would accompany to their final destination.⁶

The California gold rush, two years later, brought the greatest volume of traffic in westward migration to date. One of the most popular crossings of the North Platte that year was just below the second site of the Mormon Ferry. This ford that had been used by many earlier travelers including John C. Fremont and had been commonly called "The Old Indian Ford." Following its extensive use in 1849 it became known as "The California Crossing."⁷ That summer A. C. Metcalf returned to the North Platte River with Kit Carson and Calvin Jones from Taos and Pueblo. The three went to the mouth of Deer Creek near present-day Glenrock and erected the first bridge to span the North Platte River. This bridge, which is sometimes referred to as *The Trapper's Bridge*, was poorly constructed and failed in the high waters of the following spring. Carson and Jones returned to Taos. Metcalf reportedly died of cholera somewhere in the vicinity of Fort Laramie shortly before their departure.⁸

During the "low water season" in the fall of 1850, and learning from Metcalf's mistakes, John Baptiste Richard began construction of the second bridge to cross the North Platte River. He chose a site a few miles west of *The Trapper's Bridge* at a place near Muddy Creek that would later be known as Parkerton. Richard risked

everything he owned on the emigrant trade of the year to come. Aware of the dangers involved in crossing the Platte at high water, he knew his old partner, Metcalf, was right about a toll bridge across the Platte. Emigrants would pay nearly any price to cross the river quickly and safely.⁹

⁴ Although the Mormons accepted cash for their ferrying fee, they preferred to trade for nonperishable staples, such as sugar or flour. They knew these items could be used in the winter, regardless of where the trail might take them. Further, this trade was based on eastern prices for these goods, instead of the inflated prices of the trading posts along the trail. The end result was considerably more food for their money. *Cannon Creek* was supposedly so named because an earlier group of explorers had cached a cannon there before continuing westward. Documentation to substantiate this lore has not been found. What was then called *Cannon Creek* is now called Casper Creek. The spelling would indicate that the name change occurred after the railroad misspelled Caspar, *Casper*. The result of this minor error will forever confuse visitors of Fort Caspar Museum in Casper. Morgan, 132, 146.

⁵ Morgan, 133-135; Jefferson Glass. *Discussions with Tom Empey, 1996-1998*. (Unpublished Notes. Jefferson Glass' personal collection): Ben Kern is a modern day wagon master who has led numerous wagon-train reenactments across the Oregon, California, Mormon, and Bozeman trails in recent years. He has used a replica ferry of similar construction during his travels and says that they are a quite stable and suitable craft. Candy Moulton and Ben Kern. *Wagon Wheels*, (Glendo: High Plains Press, 1996), 153.

⁶ The Hill Ferry was located near the area presently known as North Casper. It was about half a mile west of today's Bryan Stock Trail. The Mormon Ferry's second location was in today's Reshaw Park in Evansville, Wyoming. Its exact location was about 100 yards west of the present bridge to the *Oregon Trail Veteran's Cemetery*. The various locations of the Mormon Ferry, around modern day Casper, are very confusing. The ferry was moved many times over the years. Morgan, 135-139, 154-155; Glass; Thomas Nicholas, editor, *Frontier Times and New Oregon Trail Reader*, (Town of Evansville, Wyoming, Summer 1966), vol. 1, no. 1.

⁷ John D. McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, (Casper: City of Casper, 1997), 88-89.

⁸ Archibald Charles Metcalf was born in New York in 1815, the son of Thomas and Mary Metcalf. He first appeared in the west as a partner of John Baptiste Richard (John Reshaw) on a fur trading expedition in 1840 where he operated the trading post known as Reshaw's Houses on the Old Woman Fork of the Cheyenne River. This partnership was dissolved in 1841 and Metcalf moved to *Fuerte el Pueblo*, now Pueblo, Colorado. Over the next several years Metcalf was engaged in various aspects of the fur trade from Taos, now New Mexico, to Fort Laramie. For Metcalf's life and career, see two entries in LeRoy Hafen, ed., *Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*, (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company), the first by John D. McDermott, *John Baptiste Richard*, in volume II, 290, and the second by Janet Lecompte, *Archibald Charles Metcalf*, in volume 4, 217, 223-224; three interviews in F. W. Cragin's unpublished notebooks, (hereafter cited as Cragin Notebooks) held in the Cragin Papers, Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, *Interview of Josiah F. Smith on July 18, 1903, at Pueblo, Colorado*, in Notebook XVII, p. 6; *Interview of Luz Trujillo Metcalf Ledoux*, in Notebook VII, p. 2/8; and *Interview of Jesse Nelson*, in Notebook VIII, p. 14/73; Louise Barry *The Beginning of the West*, (Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas, 1972), 415.

Richard was so enthusiastic with the plan that he talked four men, Miller, Langdon, Steele, and Randall, into investing in the scheme. His new partners thought that if one bridge would succeed, two would be even better. They obtained permission from the United States Army to also construct a bridge across the Laramie River, within the Fort Laramie military reservation. Due to its proximity, the military would regulate the toll charges, but it would still be a lucrative venture. To ensure that potential customers knew of the bridge's existence before attempting to ford the river at some lower crossing, Richard advertised in the *St. Joseph Gazette* on February 26, 1851. The ad said he would have 150-200 ponies for sale at his Ash Point trading post, adding that he had "very nearly completed a bridge across the North Platte."¹⁰

A short time later the *Missouri Republican* reported that Richard had completed his project, "a fine and substantial bridge has been built over the Platte 100 miles above [Fort] Laramie." The *Frontier Guardian* in Kanesville, Iowa reported on May 16, 1851, "William and T. Randell (en route to [Richard's] new North Platte River bridge) with groceries and provisions for emigrants; J. B. Nichols (for Fort Laramie); "Richard's & Co." (trader John Richard's outfit) with Provisions, &c." In May John Richard was so optimistic about the coming success of the *Parkerton Bridge* that he moved his brother Peter, who had been running the post at Ash Point, to the bridge and sold the Ash Point Trading Post to Ward and Guerrier from Pueblo.¹¹

John Richard's optimism for the success of the bridge was unwarranted. Traffic on the Oregon Trail was unusually slow that year and the waters of the North Platte River remained low. The emigrant trains passed by Richard's Parkerton Bridge, with few even noting its existence in their diaries. They forded the river at any of the many convenient locations along the route.¹²

Early in 1852, the high spring waters were rising in the Platte and John Richard was hoping for a profitable season. Unfortunately, when the high waters he had wished for all winter finally came, they washed the bridge out on July 16. The Fort Laramie bridge, a project with which Richard had little direct involvement, was successful for two years. Richard relinquished his share of the bridge to the other partners in exchange for forgiving the debt incurred by the loss of the Parkerton bridge.¹³

After the Parkerton Bridge was destroyed, John Richard teamed back up with his longtime friend and business associate, Joseph Bissonette.¹⁴ They went to St. Louis in late summer, returning west by early September. On September 12, 1852, Maj. Winslow F. Sanderson, with two companies of mounted riflemen, met Bissonette's wagon train, loaded with goods, at Cottonwood Point. At

the junction of the road to Independence and St. Joseph, he then met John Richard who was herding a flock of 3,000 sheep to the Mormon settlements in Utah.¹⁵ Sanderson likely did not know the two men's purpose. The wagon train that Bissonette led west ahead of Richard and his sheep was carrying tools, hardware, and other materials for the construction of a new bridge across the North Platte River. The sale of Richard's sheep would help finance the venture.

⁹ John Baptiste Richard was born on December 14, 1810, in St. Charles, Missouri. The son of Jean Francois Xavier Richard and Rosalie Cote, John Richard's family tree reads like a *Who's Who* of the earliest of French mountain men and fur traders. He came west with his father in the 1830s. Through his career he became known as one of the most notorious whiskey smugglers of the fur trade era and in 1842 bragged that no Indian Agent alive would ever catch him; he lived to prove this boast true. John Richard was commonly known as John Reshaw, this being derived from many western travelers misunderstanding the French pronunciation of the name *Richard*. Throughout this article this bridge near Muddy Creek will be referred to as the *Parkerton Bridge*. The community known as Parkerton did not exist until many years after this bridge was gone, but for the sake of differentiating this bridge from later bridges on the North Platte River, this name will be used. For Richard's life and career, see Stewart Monroe, genealogist of the Richard family, to the author, 1999-2002; Joan Leaneagh, genealogist of the Cote family, to the author, 1999; James L. Richards and Warren K. Gordon, genealogists of the Richard family, to the author, 1999; McDermott, *John Baptiste Richard*, II, 289-290, 295-296; Hila Gilbert, "Big Bat" *Pourier – Guide & Interpreter, Fort Laramie 1870-1880* (Sheridan, Wyoming: Mills Company, 1968), 4; Gregory M. Franzwa, *Maps of the Oregon Trail*, (Gerald, Missouri: Patrice Press, 1982), 117.

¹⁰ McDermott, *John Baptiste Richard*, II, 296; Barry, 988.

¹¹ Pierre (Peter) Richard, ten years younger than his brother John, was born September 4, 1820, in St. Charles, Missouri. See Monroe; McDermott, *John Baptiste Richard*, II, 297; Barry, 987; Brian Jones, *Those Wild Reshaw Boys* (Frances B. Taunton, editor, *Sidelights of the Sioux Wars*, London: English Westerners Society Special Publication No. 2, 1967), 9.

¹² Jones, 11.

¹³ Jones, p. 12, 42; F. W. Cragin, *Interview of William T. Eubank on August 18, 1908, at Denver, Colorado*, Cragin Notebooks I, p. 5/25 & 6/26; Rev. J. McAllister; Paul Henderson, ed., "Rev. J. McAllister Diary," *Annals of Wyoming* 32 (October 1960), 225.

¹⁴ Bissonette first allied with Richard in the Siblette and Adams Trading Company in 1842. He was next partners with Richard and several other Richard family members at Fort Bernard in 1845. Charles E. Hanson Jr., ed., *The David Adams Journals*, (Chadron: Museum of the Fur Trade, 1994), 48. Joseph Bissonette (1818-1894) was the son of Louis Bissonette (1774-1836). He should not be confused with his uncle, Joseph Bissonette, who became known as Jose Bissonette, after obtaining Mexican citizenship in the early 1800's in Taos. John D. McDermott, *Joseph Bissonette*, in Leroy Hafen, ed., *Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*, (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company), IV, 49-60. Joseph Bissonette was also the nephew of Paul Primeau, who was appointed the administrator of his father's estate January 2, 1837. His uncle, Joseph "Jose" Bissonette, was still living in Taos at the time. John C. Luttig, *Journal of a Fur Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri 1812-1813*, (New York: Argosy-Antiquarian Ltd., 1964), 148-149.

¹⁵ Barry, 1127.

Richard was joined again with his former partners, Joseph Bissonette and Charles Bordeaux, along with a group of five new partners.¹⁶ This bridge would be constructed only 200 feet above the second location of the 1847 Mormon Ferry, a quarter of a mile above the popular ford known as the California Crossing.¹⁷ Two of the five new partners were Louis Guinard and William Kenceleur.¹⁸

Bissonette was heavily involved in the partnership of the bridge from its onset. In January 1853, he wrote to Thomas Pim in St. Louis. He asked Pim to keep books for their company that was building a new bridge across the North Platte River.¹⁹

In a "Notice to Californians," Bissonette, Kenceleur & Co. stated in the *St. Joseph Gazette* on February 23, 1853, that a "substantial" bridge across the North Platte River would be finished "in time for the earliest trains". The advertisement continued:

There will be at the Bridge two Blacksmith and Wagon maker's shops, for the accommodation of emigrants. The company will have a good Grocery Store and eating house, and all kinds of Indian handled peltries, also oxen, cows, horses, and mules at low prices . . . Bissonette, Kenceleur, & Co.'s. St. Joseph agent, R. L. McGhee.

Richard built a log cabin, blacksmith shop and other buildings at the bridge on the south side of the river, in time for the first wagon train's arrival. Perhaps good fortune was finally smiling on him as the Fort Laramie Bridge washed out that spring. He had liquidated that partnership before incurring further losses.²⁰

Richard had learned his lessons in bridge building. He employed Joseph McKnight at the bridge for several years who described the bridge. The new bridge was built on several wooden piers, made of heavy timbers in a diamond shape to divert the water around them; they were then filled with rock for stability. The north abutment was a sandstone cliff that rose several feet above the high water line. The south end of the bridge was slightly lower as it extended some distance to meet the sloping prairie. To further strengthen the piers they were cross-timbered internally before the rock was added. These piers were 30-40 feet apart and spanned by logs hauled from the mountain, seven miles to the south. After all had been braced, stayed, and fastened together with iron bolts, the deck was laid. Made from four-inch thick hand-sawn planks, each was hand fit tightly together and spiked to the span logs. Afterward a heavy railing was installed to prevent livestock from drifting over the side. This railing carried extra bracing at each of the piers to further strengthen the structure. The completed bridge overall was about 1,000 feet long and 15-18 feet

¹⁶ In 1845-1846 John Richard was the proprietor of Fort Bernard, a trading post established below Fort Laramie near present Lingle. Fort Bernard was base for the trading business of "Richard and Company." This partnership included John Richard's brother Peter, Joseph Bissonette, and his brothers-in-law, Charles Bordeaux and Charles B. Branham. Bordeaux married Rosalie Richard in St. Charles, Mo., in 1839. Many references to the Bordeaux of the Richard & Company partnership state that this was James Bordeaux of the American Fur Company, but a few years ago this author proved that he was not the Bordeaux in this partnership. Studies suggest that John Richard's brother-in-law, Charles Bordeaux, was the partner. Branham married Mary Elizabeth Richard (his second wife) August 2, 1843, in St. Charles, Mo. He was born in Kentucky in 1811. He died in Boone County, Mo., in 1893. Monroe; McDermott, *John Baptiste Richard*, II, 294; F. W. Cragin, *Interview of Vincente Trujillo on November 9, 1907, at Avondale, Colorado*, Cragin Notebooks X, p. 6/29-6/30.

¹⁷ The new bridge was known as The Bridge or Platte Bridge until 1860, when Louis Guinard built another bridge a few miles upstream. It then became known as Reshaw's (Richard's) Bridge or Lower Platte Bridge while the other was called Guinard's Bridge or Upper Platte Bridge. Thomas Nicholas, then Evansville town attorney, found the exact location of Reshaw's Bridge in the 1960s. The town erected a replica of the southern portion of the bridge in 1979. The bridge is located in Reshaw Park, about 100 yards west of the current bridge to the Oregon Trail Veteran's Cemetery. "Timbers From Old Reshaw Bridge Found," *Casper Star Tribune*, October 9, 1966, 4.

¹⁸ Guinard, a partner in Richard's Bridge, his own bridge eight years later, seven miles upstream from Richard's Bridge. William Eubank said that John Richard and Louis Bernard [Guinard] had been partners in Richard's Bridge. Around 1855 they "got at odds, and the latter went and built a bridge about 75 miles further up the Platte [Sweetwater Bridge]." They became enemies. Since Eubank had been a freighter along the Platte and had associated with both men at this time, he likely had first hand knowledge of this partnership and the break-up. Cragin, *William T. Eubank*, notebook I, p. 5/25 & 6/26.

¹⁹ McDermott, *Joseph Bissonette*, IV, 54.

²⁰ Robert A. Murray, "Trading Posts, Forts and Bridges of the Casper Area," in *Bison Hunters to Black Gold*, (Casper: Wyoming Historical Press, 1986), 10.

²¹ William Kenceleur was born in 1804 in eastern Canada. A carpenter, he lived in Missouri for many years and moved with his family to Rulo, Neb., in 1855, where, along with Eli Plant, he was one of the early pioneers. By 1860 several of John Richard's sisters had also moved to Rulo and lived two houses away from Kenceleur's family. Bissonette and Kenceleur probably were partners in the bridge from the beginning, but the wording of the ad suggests that they also had a separate partnership in another trading post. Census of Rulo, Richardson County, Nebraska, 1860; Lewis C. Edwards, *Who's Who in Nebraska, 1940* (NEGenWeb Project – Richardson County); Barry, 1140; McDermott, *John Baptiste Richard*, II, 298; Jones, 11.

²² This sum was an exaggeration, as Richard quoted to others lower figures. Joseph McKnight, born in Canada in 1829, is often called Joe or Joseph Knight. Some have apparently dropped the "Mc" in an Americanization of the name. His family moved to the U.S. three or four years later. In 1848 he moved to Minnesota, then the next year to Fort Benton. After two years he moved to St. Louis. In the fall of 1852, he was headed for Fort Laramie. He may have joined either John Richard's sheep expedition or Bissonette's wagon train. He may have been involved in building Richard's Bridge and may have even designed it. C. G. Coutant, (Unpublished Notebooks, *Coutant Collection*, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming), box 4, folder 53, book 36; Joseph McKnight, Indian Depredation Claim #8081, RG 123, cited by McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 7-8, 114.

wide. McKnight also reported that the bridge cost some \$40,000 to build.²¹

John Murray reported a very similar description of the bridge in his journal, when he saw it in 1853:

The bridge is a substantial structure- It has 8 wood framed piers filled & sunk with rock & the reaches are supported by heavy braces- The sides are railed up & bottom planked &c . . . Some of the timbers look to be sawed perhaps by hand- Where they got the timber I cant see.²²

On June 11, the wagon train that Sarah Sutton was on crossed Richard's Bridge. Sutton believed the \$500 that Richard charged for the crossing of their train was little short of highway robbery. Nathaniel Myer, who also dealt with Richard that day from another train, was forced to sell him one of his oxen. "Campment all around us. Passed two trading places...Sold one of our oxen at \$18; he got lame." If the first season for the new bridge was any indication, Richard's ill-fated luck of the past few years was soon to change.²³

Richard evidently used the cost of the bridge to explain to his potential customers why his toll fee was as high as it was. Richard reported as many various costs of construction as he charged wagon trains varying prices, depending on the conditions of fording the river. When J. R. Bradway crossed the bridge at the end of June, Richard charged eight dollars per wagon. He also told Bradway that the bridge cost \$15,000 to build, his own way of reasoning the higher toll. As the water in the North Platte River rose, so did the toll, and so did Richard's reported cost to build the bridge.²⁴

When John Murray arrived at the bridge a few days later, he patronized Richard's blacksmith shop and trading posts. He reported trading posts on both sides of the river, in order to take advantage of all possible customers. William Brown substantiated the fact: "...passed a fine bridge made of pine...last crossing place on Platte River. At the bridge there was 2 trading posts, blacksmith shop & several Indian Wigwams." The water was beginning to recede, lowering the toll rate by that day back to six dollars per wagon.²⁵

On July 1, 1853, Dr. John Smith arrived at the bridge and his wagon train camped there that night. He was told that the bridge cost \$16,000 to build and Richard was still charging his six-dollar per wagon rate. Richard told Smith that 3,000 wagons had crossed the bridge that year. The following day Smith passed the old site of the Mormon Ferry, noting that it was abandoned due to the competition from the new bridge.²⁶

Count Leonetto Cipriani crossed Richard's Bridge at the end of July. With the rapidly dropping level of the

Platte River, Richard had dropped the toll by more than half. Cipriani described his visit at the bridge:

At noon we were at the bridge, property of four Canadian brothers. Alone except for the help from the Indians, they had been able to erect a bridge of twelve arches, entirely of cedar, with piers formed of huge tree trunks and filled with gravel. Though the toll could be considered moderate, three dollars per wagon And four for every hundred head, the bridge assured them a good income.²⁷

In 1853 "Captain Stewart" recruited William K. Sloan, a fellow Scotsman, to accompany him with a train of freight-wagons to his farm near Salt Lake City. When

²² Murray's wagon train was travelling the north side of the river, or Chiles' Route as it is often referred to. The nearest timber was on what was then known as the Black Hills, now called Casper Mountain, a distance of several miles, and was probably not visible on the cloudy day he reported in his journal. John Murray, *Journal*, (Unpublished Manuscript, Special Collections, Washington State Historical Society), T-177, box 1, folder 12, p. 66-67.

²³ The migration season of 1853 was enormous. When Myer stated, "Campment all around us," he did not exaggerate. Thousands of settlers crossed the trail that year. Sarah Sutton diary, cited in McDermott, *John Baptiste Richard*, II, 299; Nathaniel Myer: Edward B. Ham, editor, *Journey Into Southern Oregon: Diary of a Pennsylvania Dutchman* - Oregon Historical Society Magazine.

²⁴ Diary of J. R. Bradway, p. 43, Library of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Bradway left a letter and a portion of his journal with Richard to be sent back home with the first eastbound traveler that happened by. Bradway reported a coal mine in the north bank of the river that Richard used to fuel the fires in his blacksmith's shops, and to heat his home and other business enterprises.

²⁵ At the trading post Murray purchased flour at ten dollars per hundred weight. After having his team shod, he bought extra shoes at a dollar per pair and nails at seventy-five cents per dozen. *Ibid.*; John Murray, 66-68; William Richard Brown, *William Richard Brown - Diary*, (Mokelumne Hill, California: privately printed, 1985), 44.

²⁶ Diary of Dr. John Smith, 1853, Huntington Library. Portions of the diary were copied by Susan Badger Doyle for the author in 1996.

²⁷ Cipriani was likely amused by the vast number of Indian lodges surrounding the bridge and assumed that they had assisted in its construction. More likely they were some of Richard's many Indian friends and family partaking of his well-known generosity. Count Leonetto Cipriani, *California and Overland Diaries*, (Champoeg Press, 1962), 89; McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 7. The four Canadian brothers were most likely John and Peter Richard, Joseph Bissonette and Charles Bordeaux. Joseph Richard, born in St. Charles, Mo., in 1823, the youngest Richard brother, was living in Pueblo. Monroe; In the early 1840s Joseph was working for his brother John Richard and Sibille & Adams. Hanson, 94. By 1846 Joseph was operating a trading post at Pueblo and remained there until the late 1850s. Vincente Trujillo traveled from Taos to Pueblo with A. C. Metcalf in 1846. He listed "Jo Rashaw" among the residents in the trading and trapping industry. F. W. Cragin, *Interview of Vincente Trujillo on November 9, 1907, at Avondale, Colorado*, Cragin Notebooks, X, p. 6/29-6/30. Tom Autobees stated that Joe Richard had a store at Pueblo and although John and Peter visited there, Joe was the only one of the brothers who actually resided there. F. W. Cragin, *Interview of Tom Autobees on July 28, 1908, at Avondale, Colorado*, Cragin Notebooks, I, p. 2/9-2/10.

they arrived at Richard's Bridge the train was in poor condition. Sloan wrote:

... a hundred and twenty miles west from [Fort] Laramie we again crossed the north fork of the Platte but on a bridge the only one we had seen since starting, this bridge was built by a Canadian Frenchman named John Richard the winter and spring preceding, and certainly was a good investment, the bridge cost not over \$5,000.00 dollars and his receipts that season were over \$40,000.00 from the bridge alone.²⁸

Richard bartered for the toll across his bridge, especially if the traveler had something he wanted. It has been said that his modest log cabin at the bridge was the most elaborately furnished home between St. Louis and San Francisco.

When William Sloan arrived at the bridge, he soon learned the practice of bartering:

There were quite a number of mountaineers located about the place and all very thirsty, from some of the men they ascertained that we had a five gallon keg of whiskey aboard the train, they must have it, price was no object. Stewart finally agreed to let them have it, in consideration of our crossing the bridge free, which was equivalent to \$125.00 for the whiskey.

John Richard, well experienced in the price of whiskey, was controlling a seething rage at Stewart's price, but it was a seller's market. While bartering for the whiskey he was eyeing Stewart's obviously dilapidated livestock. Richard merely had to wait for the next stage of the barter to reclaim his loss, which he did as Sloan soon reported. ". . . we had several head of oxen too lame to travel farther, and it was necessary for us either to leave them on the road or sell them which we did to Richard at \$2.50 per head, paying him \$100 per head for fresh and fat ones to take their place." Sloan seemed not to realize, that these one-hundred dollar oxen had been in the same condition as his two and a half dollar oxen now were.²⁹

John Richard learned the value of healthy animals to the emigrants while trading near Fort Laramie. He brought to the bridge all the livestock he could acquire prior to the emigrant season and had seen a substantial income from trading them throughout the year. He turned the animals out on the rich grassy range and mountain spring water of Reshaw Creek, now known as Elk Horn Creek where they would soon recover from the strenuous work, poor feed and alkali water along the trail. The grazing along Reshaw Creek was convenient to his location at the bridge.³⁰

The bridge, with the cooperatively aggressive spring waters of the North Platte River, was off to a booming start. On November 2, 1853, J. Soule Bowman reported

to the *Missouri Republican* that at a point 150 miles above Fort Laramie: "Here a substantial bridge has been erected over the river at which emigrants can cross their stock in safety, and at a fair price." Although his distance may have been off by a few miles, and the price may have varied with the rise and fall of the river, Bowman passed on to the public the first published statement by any unbiased party who had actually seen the bridge. Other bridges had been advertised as "substantial" and were washed away before the emigrants could get there to use them. Here was a bridge that had withstood the spring floods of 1853 and would be there for those who would make the trip across the trail next year.³¹

During the spring of 1854, Peter Garnier was working at Richard's Bridge. His Indian wife gave birth to a son; the first known child to be born in the settlement that was forming on the south bank of the river. This new arrival was named Baptiste, but everyone called the boy Bat. Richard was very fond of the boy. Baptiste Garnier, nearly from infancy, was less than enthused with his older sisters. Instead he attached himself to John Richard's sons. The admiration was seemingly mutual and Bat grew up virtually as a brother to the Richard boys.³²

The toll business at Richard's Bridge was not as lucrative in 1854 as it had been the previous year. The nor-

²⁸ "Autobiography of William K. Sloan," *Annals of Wyoming*, 4 (July 1926), 245-246.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Stewart had profited by about twenty-five times his purchase price on the whiskey trade, which is certainly a nice margin, but Richard gained forty times his investment on the oxen, which substantially compensated for his loss on the whiskey. John Richard may have had very little education, but he fully understood the value of the goods and services that he dealt in, and most assuredly was an extremely shrewd businessman at the bargaining table. John Richard was well known for having good livestock to sell to the emigrants. He advertised it in eastern newspapers. He was one of the pioneers in this method of refreshing the animals, but the practice was not uncommon. His range was along Reshaw Creek and that this is why the creek acquired that name. Sgt. Isaac Pennock mentioned the creek in two separate areas of his diary. Although his distances varied in accuracy, his descriptions of this and other nearby drainages indicate it to have been what is now called Elk Horn Creek: "This fight along Reshaw Creek, four miles from Lower [B]ridge." ". . . three miles from [lower] Bridge, passed Reshaw Creek 7 miles from upper bridge." Sgt. Isaac "Jake" Pennock, "Diary of Jake Pennock, 1865," *Annals of Wyoming*, 23 (July, 1951), 12, 22. Magloire Mosseau also confirmed the location of Reshaw Creek. He stated the order of available water in the vicinity on the south side of the river as; "Deer Creek, Cottonwood Springs, Muddy Creek, Richard (Reshaw) Creek, Willow Creek, Fort Caspar." Ricker, *Magloire Mosseau*, tablet 28, p. 47-48.

³¹ J. Soule Bowman, *Missouri Republican*, November 2, 1853, cited in Jones, 11.

³² Nothing seems to be known about Peter Garnier or where he came from. Jones, 15, 42. J. W. Vaughn, *The Reynolds Campaign on Powder River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 142.

mally high waters of the spring never came. Almost a year to the day after Richard had charged Sarah Sutton's wagon train \$500 to cross, he charged Thomas Reber's entire wagon train only \$38. He lowered his tolls hoping to attract the emigrants to his blacksmith shop and trading post. The previous year's boom never came. Possibly due to the dryness of the season, the Sioux were antagonistic to the settlers along the trail. Traffic was only moderate in comparison to previous years.³³

The first significant conflict between Indians and whites occurred in August, 1854, along the North Platte River. Shortly before arriving at Fort Laramie, a Mormon wagon train had a withering ox that, too lame to pull a heavy wagon, lagged along behind the train on the trail. A Miniconjou warrior, High-Forehead, saw the straggler. He shot the ox and took it to a nearby Brule village, where he had been staying. The highest-ranking chief of the Brule Sioux, Conquering-Bear, headed the village. The owner of the ox complained to Fort Laramie authorities.

On August 19, 1854, young Lt. John L. Grattan, was sent with some 30 soldiers and two cannons to confront Conquering-Bear. When the old chief could not produce the missing ox, Grattan apparently shot and wounded Conquering-Bear. The Brule warriors returned fire on Grattan and his troops, killing all of the soldiers except one, who escaped to the fort before succumbing to his wounds. Following what would soon be known as the Grattan Massacre, the seriously wounded Conquering-Bear was taken the short distance to James Bordeaux's trading post where he died. Bordeaux had evidently been given the responsibility of dispensing a portion of the Indian's annuity goods, which he stored at the trading post. Following the death of their chief, the Brule band then ransacked Bordeaux's post and in addition to the annuities, took nearly everything that Bordeaux owned. Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, considered the Grattan Massacre "the result of a deliberately formed plan" by the Sioux to rob the annuity goods from Bordeaux's Trading Post.³⁴

On November 29, 1854, Major William Hoffman was in command of Fort Laramie and reported 1,000 lodges of Sioux were camped on the headwaters of the Running Water (Niobrara River) and were planning a war against the whites throughout the winter. Although Indian Agent A. D. Vaughn at Fort Pierre filed a similar report, it was not the season that the Sioux would normally go to war, and they did not stage any attacks until the following spring.³⁵

In the fall of 1854 John Richard contracted Joseph McKnight to make some significant repairs on the bridge during the off-season. Richard then assembled his entourage and went to the Green River to trade for horses

through the winter. Richard and his men spent the entire winter collecting a sizeable herd of mixed horses and mustangs. Many of these animals were tamed, but the crew spent any available time breaking them to harness. After a long and hard winter's work the men finally returned to the Platte in the spring of 1855 with a large herd of replacement stock for the emigrant season.³⁶

Joseph Merivale was on this horse-trading and hunting expedition. He described their return to the bridge:

We burned off the old grass to let the new grass grow, one night five Crow Indians came in and told us that they saw a party of Blackfeet, that night the ponies were all stolen; I followed them the next morning with two Oglalas, *Torn-Belly* and *Black-Hills* . . . on the best of a few tired-out mounts that the Indians had left, we followed them about 25 miles to the north but did not overtake them.

All that they had worked months for had been lost overnight.³⁷

In the spring of 1852, Magloire Mosseau had gone to work as a clerk at the Devil's Gate Trading Post, erected by the partnership of Charles Lajeunesse, Hubert Papin, and Moses and Charley Perat. All of these men had earlier been either partners or employees of the American Fur Company. In 1855, Louis Guinard joined the partnership. With this new addition, the partners erected a toll bridge spanning the Sweetwater River seven miles below the trading post, just downstream from Independence Rock.³⁸

John Richard had hoped to recuperate from his losses from the spring with business at the bridge, but he suffered there too. The emigrant traffic came grinding to a near halt due to the various marauding bands of Sioux along the trail. It was not long before the Army put a stop to all trade with the Indians in the vicinity. This was virtually Richard's last remaining source of income and now it too was gone for the year. Major Hoffman at Fort Laramie realized the importance of Richard's Bridge to the emigrants as well as mail and freighting operations.

³³ Thomas Reber: Albert M. Tewsbury, editor, *The Journal of Thomas Reber*, (MA Thesis, Claremont College).

³⁴ Robert M. Utley and Wilcomb E. Washburn, *American Heritage History of the Indian Wars* (New York: American Heritage/Bonanza Books, 1982), 205; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Crazy Horse and Custer: The Parallel Lives of Two American Warriors*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1975), 55-60; McDermott, *James Bordeaux*, V, 73-74; McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 9; Jones, 13, 42.

³⁵ Hyde, 51.

³⁶ Murray, 10.

³⁷ Joseph Merivale, deposition, November 2, 1886, file 8081-123, Indian Claims Files, National Archives. Cited by Murray, 10-11. John Richard lost 75 horses to the raiding party. Hyde, 51.

³⁸ Ricker, *Magloire Mosseau*, tablet 28, p. 15-20.

He requested a detachment of troops be sent to protect it from potential Indian depredations. His request was approved. On October 28, Lt. James Deshler, with 21 enlisted men and two non-commissioned officers were sent "to the Bridge 125 miles above this Post and establish himself there with a view to prevent depredations of Indians, and to give protection to the mails and persons traveling on the road."

John Richard and his family were ordered to Fort Laramie for their own protection and, though disgruntled, they obeyed. The partners at Sweetwater Bridge and Devil's Gate were given their choice of going to Fort Laramie or Green River. Magloire Mosseau chose Fort Laramie. All of the others, who had Shoshone wives, opted for Green River. Lt. Deshler, following his orders, set up camp on a low hill southwest of the bridge. This location had a commanding view of both sides of the river. The site, however, was open and the high-ground posture subjected his men, camped in Sibley tents, to the severe winds for which the area is famous. Conditions only worsened as winter approached.³⁹

Following the Grattan Massacre, Jefferson Davis appointed Gen. William S. Harney to campaign against the Sioux. Little-Thunder, the successor of Conquering-Bear, was camped on Blue Water Creek with his village of 250 Brules, mostly women and children, on Sept. 3, 1855. Harney, "The-Butcher," as the Sioux called him, surrounded the Brules and laid siege to their camp. When the smoke lifted 85 "warriors" were dead, and 75 women and children were captured.⁴⁰

Lt. John Mendenhall was ordered from Fort Laramie to relieve Lt. Deshler at the bridge in December. Major Hoffman offered John Richard a chance to return, but with the stipulation that he not do business with any Indians. Richard argued that the Indians were his only potential customers at his trading post during this season. His plea was ignored and, thus, he refused the offer to return. The next month Lt. Robert Clinton Hill took command of the detachment at Richard's Bridge.⁴¹

In March 1856, Capt. Henry Heth was sent to take charge of the operations at the bridge. This time, John Richard and his family returned with him, but without restrictions. By this time the detachment had grown to a full company, complete with three officers and a bugler. A mountain howitzer was added to increase their strength. In February the encampment had acquired the name of "Camp Davis," in honor of Jefferson Davis, which it remained until disbanded. Richard was once again in his glory. The water was high, emigrant trade was good, and he was enjoying a fair amount of trade from the soldiers of the 10th Infantry at Camp Davis, only a few hundred yards from his trading post.⁴²

Soon after Heth's arrival at the bridge, the first confrontation arose between the Army and the Northern Cheyenne. When a band of this tribe were camped near the bridge, a young warrior, Little Wolf, found a group of stray horses belonging to Charles Antoine, one of Richard's employees. Trying to regain his missing horses, Antoine offered a reward for them. The warrior offered to return all but the best horse. Antoine then reported the matter to Captain Heth who sent for the chief of the Cheyenne band. The chief then returned to his camp and sent the warrior with his cavvy to Camp Davis. Antoine identified his four horses and Heth told the young Indian that he would receive five dollars each for them as a reward for finding them. The warrior said that it would be too difficult to separate them then and that he would bring the horses in question back the following morning. This seemed acceptable to all parties and each went their separate ways.

Later that evening, however, Heth learned that the warrior still intended to keep Antoine's best horse and would shoot anyone who tried to take him. Heth then sent Lt. Nathan Dudley and his men to capture the Indian, the horses, and the reward and return them to camp. When this was done, Heth ordered the young warrior sent to Richard's blacksmith shop and put in irons. While this was being attempted the warrior escaped, being wounded in the process. Dudley was then sent back to the village to capture two hostages.

The following day one of the hostages was released, with instructions to return with the warrior, or his father, if the warrior had died from his wounds. Meanwhile, in retaliation for Heth's action, the warrior and his father killed Peter Garnier, who had been returning from Richard's pastures on Reshaw Creek. Garnier had been scalped and his body mutilated. Heth's remaining

³⁹ Thomas A. Nicholas, "Platte Bridge and the Oregon Trail in the Civil War Period - 1855-1870." *Casper Star Tribune*, February 19, 1961, 14, 16-17; Thomas A. Nicholas, "A New Look at Richard's Upper Platte Bridge and Trading Post at Evansville, Wyoming," *Casper Star Tribune*, n.d., 1963, 12-13, 16; McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 10; Ricker, *Magloire Mosseau*, tablet 28, p. 16-20. The area occupied by this military encampment is within the boundaries of Reshaw Park in the Town of Evansville, Wyoming. A protective fence has been erected pending further archaeological exploration.

⁴⁰ This massacre at Blue Water Creek was near Ash Hollow. Since the soldiers were the victors, it was dubbed a battle. Due to the recorder of the incident's ignorance of the local geography, it is usually referred to as the Battle of Ash Hollow. Utley and Washburn, 205-206.

⁴¹ Nicholas, "Platte Bridge and the Oregon Trail," 14; McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 10-11. Lt. Hill's post return for that month is the only known reference to the post being called "Fort Clay," presumably in honor of former Secretary of State Henry Clay.

⁴² Among the civilians employed by Camp Davis was Nick Janis, as interpreter. McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, p. 12; Robert A. Murray, p. 13.

prisoner, Wolf-Fire or Fire-Wolf (depending on differing records), was then sent to Fort Laramie in irons. The prisoner was successfully transported to the fort, but died there while incarcerated.⁴³

By this time Magloire Mosseau had also moved to the vicinity of Richard's Bridge. Mosseau stated that quite a number of people had collected at the bridge forming a small community. Richard employed many of these people, but not all; some lived there for the convenience and safety from Indians. Mosseau established a ranch some five or six miles above the bridge on the north bank of the river. At times he had up to 200 cattle and 120 horses and mules. Some diaries of this period mention a trading post, mostly dealing in livestock, near the top of the hill about five miles beyond the bridge. This was presumably Mosseau's operation. The date of his departure from this area is not certain, but apparently around 1864, he moved on to the South Pass area.⁴⁴

Following Peter Garnier's death, his Indian wife prepared to move her son and three daughters to Fort Laramie. John Richard did not wish to see young Bat leave. Consequently, Bat stayed on at the bridge as an extended member of the Richard family where he stayed for the next several years.⁴⁵

On July 4, 1856, the trading company of Todd & Gordon arrived at the bridge with a train of freight wagons headed for points west. Todd & Gordon broke out their whiskey and Capt. Heth furloughed his men to celebrate Independence Day. J. Robert Brown, employed by a similar company that arrived the following day, remained there a few days for repairs. The following entries from his journal describe the frontier military camp and life at Richard's Bridge:

Saturday, July 5, 1856-

We soon came in sight of the bridge across the Platte . . . Just before we got to the buildings, a soldier came out to meet us with his gun and an order from Capt. Heath [Heth] to Yates & Mauder [Brown's employers] not to sell any liquor to any one. There are several very good log buildings here; these are used as a store, dwelling houses for the traders, blacksmith shop, etc. There are about thirty lodges belonging to the Crows and Sioux, the soldiers live in lodges also; there are only fifty-eight of them here now; many are deserting at every opportunity.⁴⁶ Todd & Gordon arrived here yesterday morning, and the Capt. giving his men the holiday, they had a real drunken spree off Todd & Gordon's whisky, of which they sold a large quantity.

The brothers Richards (pro. Reshaw) own the post and the bridge here, and are coining money from it; they have made over \$200,000 apiece... They appear to be very clever men . . . We were to stop here and get our tire reset on two wagons. There are a number of men here returning

from California. They speak in the highest terms of the country. They are amusing themselves by betting with the soldiers . . . There is the most bustle and stir here for the small number of men that I have seen since I left home. This is quite a busy place. Wood is very scarce here, and we could hardly get enough to bake our bread. Capt. Heath [Heth] sent down a guard to watch Yates and his wagons, to keep him from selling whisky to the soldiers. Yates is very much vexed and put out about this, and calls it "taking away the liberties of an American citizen on his own soil!" Good, I say . . .

Sunday, July 6, 1856-

Morning cool and balmy . . . After breakfast, I agreed to help the blacksmith work on the wagon. Whistling Bill and Theodore were sent up the river about three miles to guard the cattle. The Indians are coming in from all directions; there are three tribes represented among these, Crows, Sioux, Shoshones or Snakes; some are dressed very gaudily; there were four or five young chiefs whom I admired very much, they were so well dressed in their wild romantic Indian costume—beads, feathers, brass rings and steel, buckskin and buffalo robes, were all displayed to advantage. They had some very fine horses, of which they seemed very proud . . . Naked little Indians, male and female, running all around here; some of these little fellows are models of form. Other little Indians are dressed as white children, and exhibit some taste.

Yates has been trading with the Indians this morning, giving them lead, coffee, sugar, etc., for their buckskins. A train of California emigrants passed over the bridge. Capt. Heath [Heth] sent his Lieutenant and six men and a little wagon to our camp, rolled out Yates' whisky and put it in this little wagon, and rolled it off up to camp Davis, to put the disorderly article in limbo. Todd & Gordon had to take their whisky wagon up there, too . . . The whole of this whisky matter has been a source of sport for me. I got my pistol repaired to-day for one dollar . . . Yates and Mauder have sold \$1500 worth of goods to the Richards at a fair profit. This has been an active, exciting day to me; I have been busy, and had some fun.

⁴³ McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 12-13; William Y. Chalfant, *Cheyennes and Horse Soldiers*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 34-36. Susan Bordeaux Bettelyoun related a story of Trapper Garnier being killed and scalped by Cheyennes in 1857. This could be Peter Garnier, but if so, Bettelyoun had mistaken the year. This story was hearsay, given that she was born that year. Bettelyoun, 69. J. W. Vaughn related another story of Garnier's death, stating that he was mistakenly killed one Saturday when he was bringing home a deer on his back that he had shot. Vaughn, 142.

⁴⁴ Ricker, *Magloire Mosseau*, tablet 28, p. 21-24, 51.

⁴⁵ Bat grew to learn both sides of his mixed heritage and become one of the most outstanding scouts and hunters the United States military ever employed. Brian Jones, 42; Vaughn, 142; Julie Dean, "Transition Years, 1880-1890 – Chapter Three - Fort Robinson Illustrated," *Nebraskaland Magazine* 64 (Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, January-February, 1986), 42-44.

⁴⁶ The deserters were 1st Sgt. Edward Lovejoy and Sgt. Fred Meredith. Both departed shortly after the murder of Peter Garnier. McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 13.

Monday, July 7, 1856-

After breakfast I again helped the blacksmith finish the wagons ... Yates and Billy replaced the goods in three wagons, having sold one to the Richards ... Todd and Gordon again hitched up and left us, saying they were going to beat us into Salt Lake, or kill all their oxen. Yates says they "sha'nt" ... There are not so many Indians about today as there were yesterday. After the Crows left yesterday, the Sioux went out and drove in all their horses and stood guard over them all night ...

"I went up to the Captain's camp to get some beans. I had to wait until they were done drilling the Company, when the Captain invited me into his lodge. I conversed with him and his Lieutenant for some time, and found them very sociable and agreeable. Captain asked \$10 per bushel for beans; this was more than Yates said to give, so I returned without them. As soon as I got back, we started; crossed the bridge, which is an excellent one, built entirely of wood. At the north end of this bridge is an excellent coal mine. We traveled over a very hilly and sandy road, and camped near the river ..."⁴⁷

Depredations by the Indians had been minimal along the Platte for several months and the trading post had grown into a sizeable civilian community. By the fall of that year the Army decided to abandon Camp Davis. Given earlier problems with the enlisted men at the post, officials may have feared that all the men would desert if condemned to spend another winter at the camp. In November 1856, Capt. Charles S. Lovell, then in command of the camp, was ordered to pack up his 10th Infantry Company and return to Fort Laramie.⁴⁸

As tensions grew between the United States Government and the Latter Day Saints in 1857, military troops were sent to Utah in the so-called Mormon War. Among the many officers ordered to Utah was Capt. John Wolcott Phelps. On Sept. 13, 1857, Capt. Phelps and his company of 2nd Dragoons arrived at "The Bridge," as he reported was the only name used for Richard's Bridge at that time. He remarked on Richard's ingenuity for creating the structure, although low water that fall allowed he and his troops to ford the river just above "The Bridge." He also noted the presence of the small coal mine on the north bank of the river there. Richard had gone to St. Louis and had yet to return, but the trading post did a booming business from Phelps' troops. The company camped a few miles beyond the bridge on the north bank of the Platte and spent the following day at *rest*, which Phelps explained was not at all like it sounded. *Rest*, he stated, meant not moving. In fact it is a grueling day of labor, greasing wagon wheels, shoeing livestock, and making all of the numerous repairs necessary to proceed the following day. Phelps did manage to catch up with his correspondence that day and read a copy of the

Mormon's *Deseret News* that had been picked up at Richard's Trading Post.⁴⁹

On November 30, 1857, F. W. Lander presented a preliminary engineering report on the western wagon road to the Secretary of the Interior. Lander's report was not presented to Congress until early in 1859. Had this report been acted upon soon after its writing, America's westward migration may have developed in a considerably different manner. The following paragraphs are excerpts from that report regarding Richard's Bridge:

I was guided by the following conclusion, viz: A large sum of money had been appropriated to build a practicable wagon road over a route where a practicable wagon road had existed for the last ten years. Want of grass, danger of loss of stock by deleterious and poisonous waters, extreme tolls levied by traders' bridges, and the circuitous route pursued, were difficulties to be overcome or obliterated . . .

A preliminary reconnaissance, made by [t]he chief engineer, has established the fact that several days' travel can be saved upon the rear division between Fort Kearney and the South Pass. The emigration can also be divided on this division, much sandy road avoided, and many of the traders' bridges rendered free by the expenditure of the sum of \$40,000 . . .

In the last instance, it is proposed that the work is to be done during the summer of 1859, and after the division from the South Pass to City of Rocks is completed the bridges of the rear division to be rendered free by the proceeds of the sale of the stock of the expedition when the work is over. This proposal to postpone the purchase of the traders' bridges until 1859 must be qualified by the presumption of the fact that the present tolls will be an exorbitant tax on government transportation during 1858, if large military operations are carried on in Utah Territory.

The arrival of Assistant Engineer Mullowny will bring intelligence of a new route, by which it is proposed to avoid the bridge over the north fork of the Platte. The price of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) is asked for the bridge by the owner, and the passage of it yearly costs the emigration from four to ten thousand dollars. The bridge is offered for sale in apprehension of the building of a free bridge by the wagon road expedition. The owner, Mr. John Richard, is a reliable mountain trader. He proposes either to give bonds to keep the bridge in good

⁴⁷ The journal entries are quoted directly from *J. Robert Brown's Journal*. Yale University has given their permission to print them. Journal, J. Robert Brown, Western Americana Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut, 51-54.

⁴⁸ Robert A. Murray, 14.

⁴⁹ Capt. John Wolcott Phelps, *Diary of August 16, 1857 to September 29, 1857*. Rare Books and Manuscripts, New York Public Library, New York.

repair for six years, and to renew it if destroyed within that time, or to receive only one sixth part of the purchase money yearly. The same arrangement could undoubtedly be made in relation to the bridge at [Fort] Laramie. In view of the large military operations now going on in the country, the War Department might properly join their funds with those of the wagon road in the purchase of the Richard bridge...⁵⁰

By early June 1858, the U.S. Government decided to re-establish a post at Richard's Bridge to protect and assist the numerous trains of supplies that were traveling west to support the troops in Utah. Capt. Joseph Roberts commanded two companies of artillery that arrived there in July. More than 100 men were stationed at the new "Post at Platte Bridge," including some two dozen civilian teamsters. The new post was set up just south of the former Camp Davis. Officially it was the "Post at Platte Bridge," but unofficially it was referred to as "Camp Payne" in honor of Lt. Col. M. M. Payne of the 4th Artillery. The soldiers stationed there satirically revamped this popular name into "*Camp Pain*" shortly after Private John Morgan died in the post hospital that August. One of the junior officers at Camp Payne was 1st Lt. Joseph Claypoole Clark Jr., a talented artist who drew "a well and neatly executed topographical sketch of the post and its vicinity."⁵¹

Rumors of gold in the Rocky Mountains had been circulating for years, but most seekers of the precious metal had concentrated their efforts in the Sierra Nevadas of California. Early in 1858, however, new information, presumably contributed by Indians, prompted two expeditions into the Pike's Peak region of Colorado. In May, one group left Lawrence, Kansas, in search of the alluring yellow metal. Shortly after their arrival, members of the Lawrence Company were panning gold from Cherry Creek at present-day Denver, Colorado. Within days, John Richard received word of the strike through his network. He traveled to Fort Laramie where he and some cronies set off for the South Platte to confirm the story.

By the end of August word of the gold strike had reached St. Louis and John Richard was one of the first men to have reported it. He had arrived in Kansas City August 28, with reports that a very rich gold find had been made and that even with limited prospecting amazing results were obtained. He claimed two men with poor equipment had washed out \$600 in gold in less than a week. On Sept. 1, 1858, the *Missouri Republican* reported that John Richard, Charles Martin,⁵² and William Rencleleur [Kenceleur] had recently arrived at Rulo, Nebraska Territory, with news that gold had been discovered on Cherry Creek. By the time John Richard, Elmore King and C. C. Carpenter arrived in St. Louis

the rush had already begun. The excitement that these reports had created in St. Louis had kicked off the famous Pike's Peak Gold Rush.⁵³

Before year's end John Richard had met his brother Joseph at Cherry Creek where they opened the first store there and supplied the miners with numerous necessities. Joseph Richard also started a ranch on Clear Creek, some five miles outside of the town that would become Denver, Colo. Peter Richard opened a trading post at Cheyenne Pass that he ran in conjunction with his brother's operations at Cherry Creek and Richard's Bridge. John Richard did not give up his bridge operation to work in the gold fields; instead he used both to his advantage.

The miners when arriving at Cherry Creek were often too busy or too broke to care for the livestock that brought them there. Consequently, most of these animals were turned loose on the prairie to fend for themselves. For those who could afford it, care and grazing were offered (for a nominal fee of course) at Joseph's nearby ranch. For the rest Richard would offer to purchase their livestock at a minimal price. All sources of wild game were soon driven from the area by the influx of miners. In a short time there was a shortage of available meat to feed the growing population. John Richard was the man to take advantage of this situation. He had established large herds of both oxen and beef cattle in the north. The horses and mules he acquired at the "diggings" were herded to Richard's Bridge, where he received top dollar for them from the emigrants. Once there, his drovers gathered a herd of cattle to take back to Joseph's Clear Creek ranch.

⁵⁰ F. W. Lander, *Preliminary report of F. W. Lander, Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 35th Congress, Feb. 23, 1859*, (National Archives).

⁵¹ This "sketch" unfortunately has eluded the historian's searches. If ever discovered it will provide valuable information to the archeologists who have worked at the site. McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 16-17; Murray, 15.

⁵² Charles Martin was born in Canada in 1818. He was listed as one of the founders of Rulo, Nebraska, along with William Kenceleur and Eli Plant in the summer of 1855. He also appeared on the 1860 census there. His early exploits in Colorado must have been very lucrative. His occupation was listed as *Gentleman* and his personal and real estate value at \$11,000. Edwards; Census of Rulo, Richardson County, Nebraska Territory, 1860.

⁵³ Articles from *Missouri Republican*, August 31, 1858, and September 1, 1858, cited by Brian Jones, 15-16, 42; McDermott, *John Baptiste Richard*, II, 300; McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 16; Barry, 1140. Carpenter was a member of the Lawrence Company. Brian Jones, 15. William "Rencleleur" was undoubtedly William Kenceleur, who had been a partner in Richard's Bridge and Joseph Bissonette's Trading Posts. According to the 1860 census, Kenceleur was born in Canada in 1804. He had three children by a previous marriage ranging from 11 to 17 years old and a 19-year-old wife, Zella, who was the mother of their six-month-old daughter, Melissa. William's occupation was listed as Carpenter and the value of the family estate at \$5,120. Census of Rulo, Richardson County, Nebraska Territory, 1860.

Richard made money at both ends of the trail. During this time he employed more than 20 Indian women at the bridge making buckskin clothing, moccasins and other Indian items that could be sold to the miners in Colorado. This enterprise was the first operation that could be classified as an industry in what is now Wyoming.⁵⁴

The wagon train of F. M. Baker arrived at Richard's Bridge in the spring of 1859. Baker recorded the day:

Started on again, soaking with rain, and reached a ranch at Platte Bridge, an eight-span wooden structure. Crossed over and paid two dollars per team of four horses. Rain slackened, and after awhile stopped for dinner. At the ranch two companies of troops were stationed. Quite a number of Indians hung around. A young-looking squaw came along with her ponies and papooses. She had on a clean calico dress, mostly of a pink color. Her children looked clean . . . She tied a long strap around the second pony's neck, then started her own pony with agility, and throwing over her shoulders her clean white blanket, she was off in a moment, her nest of papooses next, her little boy following, then a mare and colt.⁵⁵

On April 26, 1859, shortly after Baker's visit to the bridge, an Indian fatally stabbed a Frenchman named LaBeau in the chest. The Officer of the Day searched the village and examined several Indians in an effort to discover the assailant. He eventually arrested three men, but later released them for lack of evidence. Perhaps this was not the true reason that the investigation was so quickly dropped. "Camp Payne" was busy packing up and preparing to abandon the "Post at Platte Bridge," which they did a few days later. President James Buchanan, through Thomas L. Kane and peace commissioners Ben McCulloch and Lazarus W. Powell, negotiated an agreement with the Mormons. Brigham Young had been pardoned nearly a year before. The Mormon War was over and, once again, the military no longer felt the need to protect the bridge.⁵⁶

In June 1859, Richard was back in command at the bridge on the Platte. Several diarists mentioned the bridge and trading post that year. Hammet Hubbard Case crossed Richard's Bridge on June 12 and called it a stout timber bridge. He also referred to the 15-20 "comfortable" log homes that stood nearby. J. A. Wilkinson also crossed the bridge the same day. He surmised that the construction of such a structure over such a swift river as the Platte must have been quite a costly project. He also ventured into the trading post. There, he was amused by the efficiency of Richard's clerks, bartering with the Indians through sign language.⁵⁷

Others were not so well entertained by John Richard and his employees. About this time another enterprising

individual offered the first competition to Richard's Bridge in several years. At a point a few miles upstream from the bridge a true ferry was put into operation. Details of the ownership of this ferry are sketchy. Previous ferries were steered across the river and landed at some point downstream to be towed back with oxen. This ferry had guide ropes that spanned the river to which the ferry was attached by pulleys and hauled back and forth across the river. Richard was furious about this challenge to his monopoly and reportedly bought out this new entrepreneur for \$300. Following this buy-out, Richard towed the ferry to the north bank of the Platte and tied it off there.

A short time later, a large wagon train bound for California arrived at Richard's Bridge and the captain of the train began negotiating with Richard for the toll. When Richard would go no lower than two-and-a-half-dollars per wagon, the captain told him that they would continue on to the ferry. To this, Richard responded that the ferry no longer existed and after a heated argument, Richard informed the captain that the price would be five dollars per wagon when they returned. The captain refused to believe him and led his train on toward the ferry crossing. When they arrived there, they found the ferry as Richard had left it and put it into operation.

When the train failed to return in an ample amount of time, Richard ascertained what had happened and gathered together a group of well-armed men. They then crossed the bridge and proceeded to a vantage point on the north bank at the ferry crossing. When they arrived at the top of a steep hill overlooking the ferry, Richard could see that all but a few of the wagons had already been crossed. Leaving the majority of his small army prepared for battle at the top of the hill, Richard and three of his best men descended the hill and confronted George Morris, who was in charge of the operation on the north side of the river. Attacking Morris with a fusillade of profanities, Richard proclaimed that he would enlist his Indian friends to ambush the wagon train and most assuredly there would be no survivors. Morris soon grew tired of Richard's verbal abuse and Richard, in his blinded

⁵⁴ Brian Jones, 16; McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 16; Hafen, Leroy. *Reports From Colorado*, XIII, 206; Gilbert, 14-15.

⁵⁵ The diary gives a description of the Indian girl. Notice that Baker uses the word "clean" three times in this description. The Plains Indians were an extremely clean people, bathing and washing their clothing far more often than most whites in that era. Portrayals of these people as dirty, misrepresents the historical facts. F. M. Baker, Hozial H. Baker, ed., *Overland Journey to Carson Valley & California*, (Book Club of California, 1973), 34-35.

⁵⁶ McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 20; MacKinnon.

⁵⁷ Brian Jones, 42-44: The diaries of Hammet Hubbard Case and J. A. Wilkinson are cited by McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 20.

fury, had not noticed Morris' movement to draw his pistol. With John Richard at gunpoint, Morris told him that he had heard enough and if he had anything more to say to tell it to the captain who was still on the south bank.

Richard, with his three men then boarded the ferry and crossed to the south side of the river, where he took up with the captain where he had left off with Morris. With a barrage of indignations and profanities, Richard laid into the captain. Suddenly, he heard the ominous click of a rifle being cocked behind him. The silence was deafening as Richard measured the circumstances in his mind. His men atop the hill on the far side of the river were out of range. If he died, those men could annihilate a large portion of this wagon train, but none of his men were in a position to cover the man who held the rifle at his back presently. Richard ordered his men back to the bridge and the foursome proceeded along the south bank. When the men had passed what Richard must have considered a safe distance, he turned and hollered back to the captain that 500 Sioux would be on them by sundown. The wagon train continued to California and arrived there without further malice or molestation.⁵⁸

Another diarist stated that John Richard, in a drunken state, drove his carriage through an emigrant train, causing a stampede in which two men were killed. Richard was not above partaking of his own whiskey nor was he above going wild at times. During the same year Richard also opened a "Sub-Post" to his bridge operation, near the Red Buttes crossing about ten miles west of Richard's Bridge.⁵⁹

Peter Richard was enjoying his own success at Cheyenne Pass. He purchased 18,000 pounds of bacon in St. Louis to sell to the miners from his trading post. At his inflated "boomtown" prices he brought in \$9,000 from sales of the bacon alone. William H. H. Larimer, a notable pioneer in Denver, commented on the spectacle of John and Joe Richard's families taking a vacation. "They had a large band of paint ponies which they would drive in and saddle for the whole family to go visiting someone for a week or two."⁶⁰

While business was booming for his brothers in Colorado, John Richard was spending the fall of 1859 at the bridge. On October 11, Capt. William F. Raynolds left camp in advance of his topographical expedition with Dr. Ferdinand V. Hayden and Mr. Wilson for the Platte Bridge. Prior to his departure, he asked his guide, Jim Bridger, if there was any danger of missing the Platte road when they crossed it. Bridger only laughed. When he saw the famous thoroughfare he realized for the first time, the significance of the migration, and the humor Jim Bridger had seen that morning in his own ignorance. Raynolds found the volume of traffic on the road aston-

ishing, even this late in the season. He was amazed when he realized that there was about the same amount of traffic eastbound as west. He was seldom out of sight from some vehicle traveling one direction or the other "upon this great highway." There was even a group of ladies traveling in an ambulance "bound for the States."

The Raynolds Expedition had traveled from Fort Pierre to the Black Hills and then southwesterly. The captain had intersected the Oregon Trail near Red Buttes. After arriving there, he and his immediate companions went east on the road and at a rapid pace soon covered the 18 miles to Richard's Bridge and Trading Post. When he arrived at the Trading Post, John Richard informed him that Lt. H. E. Maynadier's party was not far behind his own. When asked how Richard could possibly have such knowledge, he was told that an Indian informant, just recently arrived, had seen them on Powder River. Richard also gave Raynolds a four-month-old letter and told him that there were more waiting for him at the post office, Bissonette's Trading Post, at Deer Creek.

At Capt. Raynolds' request, Richard sent a man to Deer Creek for his mail and Raynolds sent a message to Fort Laramie to have their supplies there brought up. While Raynolds was enjoying the best of Richard's western hospitality and the luxury of eating dinner from a table while sitting down, the majority of Raynolds' military contingent arrived there and began partaking of the wares at Richard's two saloons. Before returning to their camp at Red Buttes, Raynolds' escort had drunk enough alcohol that they "had turned the camp into bedlam."

⁵⁸ The author has found the location of this ferry. It is just south of the present-day Casper Event's Center and the National Historic Trails Center. The owner of this ferry may have been Magloire Mosseau. Although he did not mention embarking in such an enterprise, the location was in the vicinity of the ranch he operated there at the time. Ricker, *Magloire Mosseau*, tablet 28, p. 21-24, 51; William H. Carmichael traveled to California on this wagon train in 1859. In the 1890s he resided in Wheatland, and related this story to Coutant in an interview. C. G. Coutant, *The History of Wyoming from the Earliest Known Discoveries*, (Laramie: C. G. Coutant, publisher, Chaplin, Spafford & Mathison, 1899), 365-367.

⁵⁹ Did this event occurred as an aftermath to the previous one? There are no other accounts to substantiate this event. The author of the diary did not claim to have witnessed the occurrence and this story, as he had heard it, may have been exaggerated as was often the case in the Wild Frontier. McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 21.

⁶⁰ It is obvious from the 1860 Denver census that though Joseph and Peter were the primary operators of the Colorado businesses, John still owned the controlling interests in them. Census records reported the estimated "value of personal estate." They showed Jno. [John] Richard age 50, at \$25,000; Peter Richard age 40, at \$1,400; and Joseph Richard age 35 [37], at \$10,000. All three of these men would have been considered wealthy for that period, at a time when a skilled laborer only earned around \$20-30 per month in the eastern United States. Hafen, *Reports From Colorado*, XIII, 206. The 1860 Denver census records are cited by Brian Jones, 40; Gilbert, 14.

The commander of the escort considered Raynolds' title of "Captain" simply honorary as an engineer and, consequently, that Raynolds had no authority over them. The expedition suffered a mutiny by the escort.

Without military support Raynolds, accompanied by Bridger, then performed a reconnaissance of *Carson's Creek* in search of a location to spend the winter. When Raynolds and Bridger returned to camp they found that the escort abandoned them. To their surprise, however, Lt. Maynadier had arrived in advance of his own party, who also soon joined them. That day a man arrived from Richard's Bridge with the mail for both parties from Deer Creek. The arrival of the mail and Maynadier uplifted Raynolds' spirits. Carson's Creek had proven to be an unsuitable location for their winter quarters, and the next several days were spent exploring other alternatives.⁶¹

When nearly all options to Raynolds had been exhausted, Major Thomas Twiss, the Indian Agent for the Upper Platte Agency at Deer Creek, offered a possible solution. When the Mormons abandoned their Y. X. relay station at Deer Creek a few years earlier, they left several unfinished dwellings at the site. With limited manpower and winter drawing near, these cabins seemed to offer the quickest available shelter. Capt. Raynolds took Twiss up on his suggestion and soon his expedition was afforded some protection from the elements. The completion of these houses could not have been more timely. By mid-November, with several of the men still living in tents, the thermometer had already dipped to sub-zero temperatures on more than one occasion. Raynolds and his party spent most of the winter transcribing pages of survey notes of the previous summer's work into maps and documentation.⁶²

Louis Guinard, whose bridge across the Sweetwater River had washed out the previous spring, contracted Joseph McKnight to build a new bridge across the Platte a few miles above Richard's. John Richard would be unable to control the monopoly that he had held for eight years with his bridge on the Upper Platte. The animosity Guinard was creating with the construction of his new bridge was caused by a much older enmity between the two men. To further aggravate Richard's hostility, McKnight was married to John Richard's stepdaughter and had long been in his employ. Perhaps his recently attained affluence in the Colorado gold fields was an omen that it was time for a change; life at John Richard's Bridge and Trading Post would never again be the same. His interests in Colorado had required his frequent absence from the North Platte operations, but not his involvement. These absences however may have cost him considerable influence in the development of some new ventures that were pending along the Platte.⁶³

The well known freight company of Russell, Majors and Waddell were the instigators of an organization that was not only one of the most famous, but shortest lived ventures in history--the Pony Express. These freighters invested thousands of dollars establishing nearly 200 relay stations along the proposed route in 1859 and 1860. Joseph Bissonette's Deer Creek operation was one of the selected sites. John Richard's Red Buttes Trading Post was also on the list, but Louis Guinard's new bridge was chosen over Richard's Bridge for the crossing of the Platte and, consequently, the relay station.⁶⁴

William Russell spent several months lobbying that the Platte River Route for mail service to California was far superior to the much longer southern route of the Overland Mail Company. In April 1860, the inaugural run of the Pony Express was set into motion. The delays the riders suffered along some portions of the journey were made up for by other riders along the route. By July Russell's political efforts and demonstration had paid off and the Pony Express received federal approval. Much to his dismay, the route was approved, but the contract was awarded to the Overland Mail Company. The Overland was not prepared to undertake the necessary change in their own operation and sub-contracted Russell and his partners to fulfill the obligation.⁶⁵

Several contract mail carriers were companies doing business as stage lines, including Russell, Majors and Waddell. In 1859 they had acquired the former Salt Lake Stage and Mail Line which had become the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express. Under the new owners, it was again renamed becoming the Central Overland, Califor-

⁶¹ Raynolds, Captain William F., *Report on the Exploration of the Yellowstone River*, (United States Army Corps of Engineers, 1868), p. 70-72; The *Carson's Creek* in Raynolds' description is what is now known as Bates Creek. John C. Fremont named it *Carson's Creek* on one of his early expeditions for his guide, mountain man Kit Carson. The origin of the name of Bates Creek varies depending on the source. One source states that it was named for a trapper named Bates. This trapper, according to popular lore, stumbled off the Laramie Plains into what is now Bates Hole. After becoming entangled in a mass of brush, he was forced to halt until daylight. When he awoke he looked around him and said, "Well, Bates has sure got himself into a hell of a hole this time." A less colorful, but more likely origin is that it was named for Capt. Alfred Bates following a skirmish he and his troops had there with Indians in 1874. Settlers by the early 1880s knew the creek as Bates Creek. George C. Scott, *These God Forsaken Dobe Hills: Land Law and the Settlement of Bates Hole, Wyoming 1880-1940*, unpublished MA thesis, University of Wyoming, 1978, 1-2; Mae Urbanek, *Wyoming Place Names*, (Boulder: Johnson Publishing Co., 1967), 17.

⁶² Raynolds, 72-73.

⁶³ Cragin, William T. *Eubank*, notebook 1, p. 5/25 & 6/26.

⁶⁴ Bryans, 118-121; McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 25.

⁶⁵ McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 25; David Nevin, *The Expressmen - The Old West*, (New York: Time-Life Books, 1974), 88-98.

nia, and Pikes Peak Express or COC & PP. The freighters quickly learned that a stage line was more difficult to operate profitably than their freight operations had been. They jokingly said the initials actually stood for "*Clean Out of Cash and Poor Pay.*" Their endeavor to obtain the mail contract through the Pony Express had been in the effort to bring their newly acquired stage line out of the red. Sub-contracting the mail for Ben Holladay's Overland Mail Company was nearly as unprofitable for the stage line as it had been without it.⁶⁶

The COC & PP continued to operate at a loss through 1860. In August of that year they carried a famous passenger, the world traveler, Sir Richard F. Burton who was observing the west, with a planned stay at Salt Lake before continuing on to California. On August 16, at Deer Creek Station he met Joseph Bissonette and thought that though other travelers may have found his well-stocked trading post's prices high, they were competitive with others he had seen along the way. Little Muddy Creek Station he found was poorly stocked, "—whiskey forming the only positive item."⁶⁷

Burton's observations shed considerable light on John Richard, his bridge and the community that surrounded it. Burton's experience as a scholar of diversified cultures and human behavior prompted him to see life from a different prospective than most of the diarists of the era. Even in late August he noted the necessity of the bridges crossing the Platte's raging currents. Enjoying a glass of whiskey in Richard's "indispensable store, —the *tete-de-pont*," he was surprised to have it served "on ice," the first he had seen in weeks. The sign bearing the name of Richard's saloon, the *Tete-de-pont*, must have been prominent for Burton to mention it. It is surprising that Burton, who had spent a considerable time in France and had some command of that language, should also misspell Richard, as *Regshaw*.⁶⁸

He also must have carried on a detailed conversation with the proprietor to ascertain that he had "gained and lost more fortunes than a Wall Street professional 'lame-duck'." The coal vein on the north bank of the river showed signs of development when Burton was there and he concluded that due to the lack of other sources of fuel in the area, that this could prove to be one of Richard's most valuable assets.⁶⁹ The settlement adjoining Richard's Bridge had also grown over the years, to the point that Burton referred to it as a "town." Nearby, the then vacant "Post at Platte Bridge" had deteriorated to "a few stumps of crumbling wall, broken floorings, and depressions in the ground."

After enjoying John Richard's amenities, Burton's coach continued on the short distance to Guinard's Bridge where he spent the night at the COC & PP station. Louis

Guinard and his Shoshone wife who operated the station met him there. He was unimpressed by the accommodations and disgusted by the meal that was served. Wishing he had eaten at Richard's, Burton commented: "It was impossible to touch the squaw's supper; the tin cans that contained the coffee were slippery with grease, and the bacon looked as if it had been dressed side by side with 'boyaux'. I lighted my pipe, and air-cane in hand, sallied forth to look at the country."⁷⁰

"The town" Burton had referred to at Richard's Bridge consisted of at least the following buildings: two saloons, two trading posts, two blacksmith shops, one large warehouse, one ice-house, one lodging house, one eatery, one livery, and 15-20 homes. The population fluctuated from about 60 to 100 civilian residents, in addition to the various military and Indian encampments. Richard also maintained a grazing camp near the foot of what is now Casper Mountain. He employed carpenters and an accountant in addition to his clerks, traders, hunters, teamsters, herdsmen, laborers and various other positions.⁷¹

As the Pony Express riders rushed past Richard's settlement to his competitor's door, it must have seemed to him that time itself was passing him by. Richard was now in his early fifties and would have been considered an old man by the standards of the day.

Joseph McKnight left the North Platte for the gold fields of Colorado after completing the construction of Guinard's Bridge. Evidently with the money he earned from Guinard, he accumulated the necessary capital to venture into business for himself. He established his own successful trading post at *Thompson* or *Thompson's*

⁶⁶ Bryans, 127-128.

⁶⁷ Sir Richard F. Burton, Fawn M. Brodie, ed., *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 154-155; Bryans, 61.

⁶⁸ The dictionary definition of *Tete-de-pont*, [French], is "work thrown up to defend the entrance of a bridge." *Webster's New School & Office Dictionary*, (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1943), 755; Burton, 155-156.

⁶⁹ Burton's observations of Richard's coal mine and the possibility future development of the coal industry in Wyoming in 1860 were accurate.

⁷⁰ Burton, 156.

⁷¹ The exact location of Richard's grazing camp is unknown. A likely candidate for the site is in the NE 1/4, of the SE 1/4, Sec. 35, T33N, R79W, 6th Principal Meridian. Surveyors, Downey & Grant in 1880 and William Owen in 1881/1882 recorded that there was a cabin at that location. This site is near the headwaters of a branch of Elkhorn Creek, which is believed to have then been the creek called Reshaw Creek. Since there was no homestead patent applied for at this location until many years later, the cabin presumably was not regularly occupied at that time. Tract map T33N, R79W, 1883; Survey notes used to compile that map, 1880-1882. USGS survey records, Bureau of Land Management, Cheyenne.

Creek, near what would later become Fort Collins, Colorado. He remained there selling supplies to the miners and trading with the Indians for the next four years.⁷²

News came to the Platte that construction had begun on the transcontinental telegraph. In 1861 Thomas Twiss left the office of Indian Agent for the Upper Platte Agency and the agency was moved back to Fort Laramie. Twiss and his Indian family remained at Deer Creek. Red Cloud was waging war upon the Crow to the north. As John Richard's half-Indian sons grew to manhood, he delegated more responsibility to them, but they were not as adept in business as their father had been.

The last boom to the community came in 1864 when Richard's Bridge became the "jump-off point" for the Bozeman Trail. By the following year shortcuts had been established to this route from Deer Creek and later Fort Fetterman. Long before the Battle of Platte Bridge (Guinard's Bridge) in 1865, John Richard had left the area and moved to Rock River on the Overland Trail. He and his family still owned the bridge and trading post on the Platte, but it was only occupied seasonally by traders in Richard's employ. During the severe winter of 1865-1866, soldiers at the new Fort Casper adjacent to Guinard's Bridge dismantled the bridge and many of the nearby buildings for firewood and building materials.⁷³

In June of 1866, John Richard Sr. was attempting to breathe life back into his operations on the North Platte River. It seems that Louis Richard may have been in charge of the affairs at the old trading post when an advertisement appeared in an unidentified Denver newspaper:

To Freighters and Emigrants
RICHARD & CO. Fort Casper, Dakota Territory
Known as the Old North Platte Bridge, or California
Crossing, 120 miles west of Fort Laramie.

Good accommodations for travelers. This is the best
and nearest road for Emigrants and Freighters to Salt Lake,
Virginia City Montana, and California.⁷⁴

This final effort to revive the once profitable enterprise also failed. Within a year Fort Casper was dismantled and moved to expand the growing Fort Fetterman 50 miles downstream. After the abandonment of Fort Casper and Richard's Bridge, there is no record of habitation in the area for several years. When James H. Bury first passed the site of the old fort in the early 1870's, there was nothing there but the charred remains of the old adobe trading post at Fort Casper. An era of prosperity on the Upper North Platte River had come to an end as the last evidence of commerce washed down the river during spring floods gradually disappeared beneath the drifting Wyoming sands.⁷⁵

⁷² Coutant, C. G., *Coutant Collection*, box 4, folder 53, book 36.

⁷³ Susan Badger Doyle, "The Bozeman Trail, 1863-1868," *Annals of Wyoming*, 70 (Spring, 1998); Murray, 23-24.

⁷⁴ Cited by McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads*, 89.

⁷⁵ Robert David, *Interview of James H. Bury – ca. 1920*, Unpublished Notes. The Bob David Collection, Goodstein Library, Special Collections, Casper College, Casper.

*Jefferson Glass wrote the biography of Jean Baptiste Richard (John Reshaw), in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Town of Evansville (May 15, 1998). Research for this article is based on that work. A chairman of the Evansville Historical Commission, he is a frequent writer on Casper area sites. He wrote "The Founder of Evansville: Casper Builder W. T. Evans," that appeared in *Annals of Wyoming*, Autumn, 1998.*

Wyoming Picture



"Lusk High School," c. 1911. The building pictured in this postcard scene still stands. After a new high school building was constructed, the structure was used as a grade school until 1953. Since then, the building is the home of the B. P. O. E. Elks. (Private collection)

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Annals of **WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal

Autumn 2002

Vol. 74, No. 4



DAVIS
VALLEY

The Cover

“Tall in the Saddle”

*a painting in the Centennial Collection, owned by the Wyoming State Historical Society and held in the Wyoming State Museum
by Dave Paulley*

Artist Dave Paulley executed this painting as one in a series commissioned by the Wyoming State Historical Society in the 1980s to commemorate the Wyoming Centennial in 1990. The painting features former Gov. Nels Smith who served as governor of Wyoming from 1939-43. Smith came to Wyoming in 1907 in a horse-drawn buggy with his father, Peter Smith. They located on the prairie north of Newcastle where they established a reputation for breeding prize Hereford cattle, Percheron draft horses and saddle horses. According to Bethel Smith, the setting for this painting is on upper Cold Creek along the Cheyenne-Deadwood trail in the Black Hills of Wyoming. “This is part of the Smith ranch that five generations of the Smith family have called home,” Bethel Smith wrote. “Many days are spent trailing and working the cattle in this beautiful setting.”

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the “Wyoming Memories” section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in “Wyoming Memories” also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal’s Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071, or to the editor by e-mail at the following address: philr@uwy.edu

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Annals of WYOMING

The Wyoming History Journal

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Reflections on Owen Wister and *The Virginian*

By John W. Stokes 2

Stokes, the grandson of author Owen Wister, recounts his memories of his grandfather in this transcription of a talk Stokes delivered at the Wister symposium, held in the fall of 2002 at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

The Virginian Meets Matt Shepherd

By D. Claudia Thompson 6

Thompson, an archivist in the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, argues that the tragic death of University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepherd in 1998 stems from the myth of the cowboy. *The Virginian*, published a century ago, popularized the cowboy as a mythical figure. In her essay, Thompson points to how the book and the late 20th century incident can be linked

Fort Laramie After the Army: Part III, Preservation

By Douglas C. McChristian 14

McChristian completes his three-part story on the famous fort in the aftermath of army departure in 1890. The first two installments examined the government-held auction of the properties and the second described how a community evolved around the site. In this final segment, McChristian writes about the successful efforts to preserve the old fort as a historic site.

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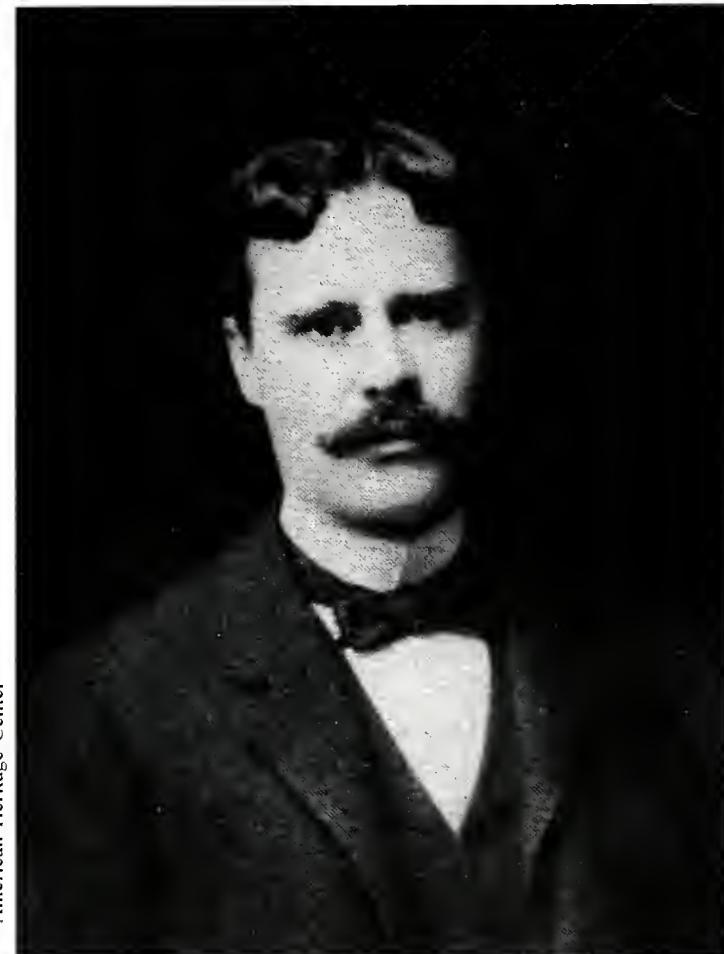
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Reflections on Owen Wister and *The Virginian*

By John W. Stokes, Grandson of Owen Wister



American Heritage Center

This reminiscence was originally presented at the Owen Wister Symposium held at the University of Wyoming, American Heritage Center on September 18-20, 2002.

*Owen Wister,
portrait made while
practicing law in
Philadelphia, n.d.*

Thank you to Rick Ewig for inviting me to this symposium. It is exciting to play a role in discussing the Wister legacy. It is a pleasure and a little daunting to be speaking to so many Wister devotees and scholars. I can only assume that each of you know more than I do about my grandfather, which is a bit humbling.

Let me say at the outset, I agree with the comments on the last picture in your wonderful Owen Wister photographic exhibit on display in your museum downstairs: "Regardless of one's opinion about the book, *The Virginian* has stood the test of time as the prototype western novel."

Before I discuss Wister's work and the 100th Anniversary of *The Virginian* from my perspective, I would like to offer a few reflections on his personal life away from the West and one of his other books.

First, a few facts to put his life in perspective. I did not know my grandfather well. My role was to deliver the mail to him each morning at his summer home, Crowfield in Saunderstown, Rhode Island. He died when I was six years old in July 1938. To me, he was a large and friendly man. (However, when you are six grown-ups tend to look big.) He loved Saunderstown and spent 40 summers there with his family.

Wister was born in 1860 outside

of Philadelphia. He attended Saint Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire graduating in 1878 and then went on to Harvard College. He graduated from Harvard in 1882 – *summa cum laude* in music. There, he was a member of the Porcellian Club where he became a great friend of fellow member Theodore Roosevelt.

Wister planned a career in music following his graduation. His grandmother, the famous Shakespearean actress and abolitionist, Fanny Kemble, arranged for him to play one of his compositions for Franz Liszt who told her Wister had pronounced talent.

Wister's father persuaded him not

to pursue a career in music but instead go to Harvard Law School. He entered in 1885 and graduated in 1888, accepting a law position in Philadelphia.

In the mid-1880s due to ill health, Wister's doctor advised him to go West. He made ten trips from 1885-1895, keeping detailed diaries of everything he saw and all the people he met. These diaries formed the basis for his western stories and *The Virginian*. The diaries were given to the University of Wyoming by my mother, Fanny Kemble Wister Stokes.

(To digress for a moment, some of you may know it was a former librarian of this University, N. Orwin Rush, who, in 1951, prompted my mother to find her father's western journals. In preparation for the 50th anniversary of *The Virginian*, Mr. Rush had written to her asking for the diaries. She replied that none of the family had heard anything about them. Mr. Rush then wrote again to my mother quoting a reference from Owen Wister's book about Theodore Roosevelt: "Upon every Western expedition I had kept a full, faithful, realistic diary: details about pack horses, camps in the mountains, camps in sage brush, nights in town, cards with cavalry officers..."

The diaries, untouched for 65 years, were readily found in Wister's desk on the second floor of his Bryn Mawr, Pa., House. Though the Library of Congress wanted them, my mother gave them with pleasure to the University of Wyoming. They also served as the basis for her best selling book, *Owen Wister Out West*).

Now let me return to Wister's life.

Wister married his second cousin, Mary Channing Wister from Boston in 1898. In the summer of 1899 Wister, newly married, came to Saunderstown for the first time and



Owen Wister photographed in Yellowstone, n.d.

to visit the Wisters. My Uncle Karl, then four years old, answered the door. T.R. said, "Tell your father the President is here." Uncle Karl responded, "The President of what?" (It's wonderful how we grown-ups can learn humility from a child.)

That year the Wisters and great family friend, Mrs. Walter Cope, who had children about the same age as the Wister children, purchased more than 100 acres together overlooking Narragansett Bay. The property was named Crowfield so the Seaview Railroad (in fact a trolley) running from Wickford to Wakefield, could stop at the foot of the hill to pick up passengers from the Cope and Wister households.

Grant LaFarge, the son of the famous stained glass artist, John LaFarge, was the architect of his house, which was completed in 1910. He, too, had been West and shared Wister's love for it.

Shortly after Wister's new house was built, Henry James, a great friend of the family, wrote to him to say how sorry he was he could not be in Saunderstown with the Wisters and "their graceful ring of friends."

Sometime later, another family friend and intellectual wag, Leonard Bacon, wrote his perception of the scene in Saunderstown:

"Hey, diddle diddle
The Cope and the Biddle
To Saunderstown we go!
With the Whartons and Bories
All in their glories
And Wisters all in a row..."

moved with his wife into a house at 25 Waterway in the village.

The Wisters were very happy in Saunderstown. They came for the quiet life, the wonderful salt air, swimming, croquet and horseback riding. Importantly, many Philadelphia friends were nearby--such as the Biddles, Bories and Whartons.

My mother was born in the Waterway house in 1901 with her twin brother, Owen. The Wisters lived there with an ever-growing menagerie of animals, including a mocking bird named Gabriel, and a team of harnessed goats to pull wagons for the children.

In the summer of 1907 Theodore Roosevelt with his entourage came

"Nothing is soldier
Than the Cadwalader
Nothing is brainier
Than Pennsylvanier
God reign on Rittenhouse Square!"

Life at Crowfield was full for the Wister and Cope children--cows to milk, chickens and horses to care for, music, French and German lessons and swimming on their own beach. We have a picture of the Crowfield Orchestra with the young Wister and Cope children and their music teacher. Every summer this little orchestra performed at the firehouse in Saunderstown for 25 cents per person to raise money for the firemen.

The Wister House was always full of music and Owen Wister generally played the piano every evening. My mother told me her favorite song of his, as a child, was:

"Here I come dum de dum
I'm a plum, dum de dum
My appearance puts others on the
bum."

As a major literary figure, Wister's life in the early 1900s was intertwined with many well-known literary and artistic personalities. Henry James, as I mentioned, was a close friend. Others included Ernest Hemingway, Oliver Wendell Holmes, William Dean Howells, Rudyard Kipling, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Frederic Remington, Robert Louis Stevenson, Mark Twain, and Edith Wharton.

Of particular interest to me was Hemingway. Wister met Ernest Hemingway in Shell, Wyoming, in 1928. They went fishing and shooting together and became close friends as they respected each other's work. Hemingway saw himself as an apprentice to the elder statesmen, Wister. They discussed *A Farewell to Arms*, which Heming-

way was working on at that time. Some weeks later, recognizing that Hemingway was short on cash, Wister sent him an unsolicited \$500 check. Soon afterward, Hemingway returned the check, which he had not cashed, because his advance for *A Farewell to Arms* had arrived.

Wister participated actively in the world around him and voiced his views on many national issues. He had a number of prestigious appointments and honors. Among them he was an Overseer of Harvard College for many years, President of the Tavern Club in Boston for which he wrote several operas, and President of the Philadelphia Club.

Owen Wister had one other best selling novel, though less successful than *The Virginian*. It was a Victorian romance set in Charleston, S.C., and published in 1906 called, *Lady Baltimore*. Today, it is best remembered for the famous Lady Baltimore cake, which is a centerpiece of the plot. The *New York Times* heralded the cake in a two-page spread this past April titled, "Rich and Famous."

Lady Baltimore is very important to me as my grandfather used the proceeds from the book to build his summer home, which we have named Wister House.

In the book the cake is the center of a love triangle with Eliza La Hue, a sweet, pure young woman, who makes the cake for a tea shoppe and John Myrant, a handsome and principled young man of promise, who ordered the cake from Eliza for his wedding to Hortense Rieppi. She is a young woman who smokes, kisses boys and goes to fast parties in New York and Newport.

When all the crumbs have settled, Hortense gets a wheeler-dealer from New York with a yacht; John gets Eliza, the cake and happiness forever.

Now let me turn to *The Virginian*. Owen Wister started writing his short western stories to save the sagebrush in literature before it disappeared with the rapid expansion westward at the turn of the century.

His own description of how it happened is in his book, *Roosevelt, A Story of a Friendship*:

And so one autumn evening of 1891, fresh from Wyoming and its wild glories, I sat in the Club (Philadelphia) dining with a man as enamoured of the West as I was. This was Walter Furness...From oysters to coffee we compared experiences. Why wasn't some Kipling saving the sagebrush for American literature before the sagebrush and all that it signifies went the way of the California forty niner, went the way of the Mississippi steam-boat, went the way of everything? Roosevelt had seen the sagebrush true, had felt its poetry; and also Remington who illustrated his articles so well. But what was fiction doing, fiction the only thing that always outlived fact?

"Walter, I am going to try it myself," Wister exclaimed to Walter Furness.

After that Wister went upstairs at the Philadelphia Club to a small study and started writing his first short story, "Hank's Woman." It was published in *Harper's* magazine in 1892.

Earlier this year I reread *The Virginian* with much pleasure. The fact the story held up so well and was not dated came as a surprise to me. I loved the dialogue and vivid descriptive passages. Having sold well over two million copies, been reprinted more than 50 times and made into a movie five times, *The Virginian* clearly was a literate blockbuster.

Today, at its 100th Anniversary *The Virginian* has done much more than save the memory of the sagebrush. To discuss this let me turn to the *New York Times* book review, June 21, 1902. The reviewer recognized *The Virginian* would live on as a brilliant narrative:

Owen Wister's Stirring Novel of Western Life

Owen Wister has come pretty near to writing the American novel. He has come as near to it as any man can well come, and at the same time has beautifully demonstrated the futility of the expectation that the typical novel of American life will ever be written. Mr. Wister has set forth a phase of life which is to be found only in the United States, and has pictured it with graphic delineative force, with picturesqueness and with brilliant narrative power. *The Virginian* ought to live as an artistic embodiment of a man fast passing into a remembrance... "The Virginian" in a broad sense is a historical novel. It

is a study of men and times. It rings true, and we believe it to be a faithful study.

The key insights in my view are: "a phase of life which is to be found only in the United States" and *The Virginian* ought to live as "an embodiment of a species of man fast passing into remembrance."

It is generally acknowledged that *The Virginian* was the first nationally popular cowboy novel and the gold standard of western literature. It broke new ground by turning the cowboy from a villain and ruffian of the West into a hero. It portrayed, in realistic tones, the bold individual spirit, reminiscent of colonial times and carried underlying themes of democracy and equality throughout. Given these ingredients and a brilliant narrator, it is no wonder the book was such a tremendous hit.

Owen Wister contributed to our country much more than a popular romantic novel about the West. As we look around today, we see that the lore of the West is part of our

everyday lives, not only in literature, but in clothing, food and music. Importantly, the western culture is only one of three in our country, which are truly indigenous. The other two are jazz and the American musical. These also started in the early 20th century. All other cultures we share together come from other lands and were brought here from abroad as our country grew and prospered.

Men such as Buffalo Bill Cody and the dime novelist, Ned Butline, popularized the West for their generation, but in my view *The Virginian* set the stage and guidelines for the development of our western culture and what one might call the code of the West. Would our romantic perceptions of the West be the same without *The Virginian*? Most likely not.

Our love of the West gives us all a common bond to share. Wister's cowboy has left us his unfettered entrepreneurial spirit and his true sense of self-reliance and personal honor. These live on with us today. It is a great legacy.



American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

Owen Wister on a ship, 1937



Remington

The Virginian Meets Matt Shepard

By D. Claudia Thompson

In 1951, in preparation for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the publication of *The Virginian*, Prof. N. Orwin Rush of the University of Wyoming wrote to Fanny Kemble Stokes, Owen Wister's daughter, to enquire into the whereabouts of the journals that Wister had kept during his trips to the west in which he had gathered material for his writings. Wister's children were unaware that such journals existed, but, after a brief search, they discovered the notebooks in a desk that had been in Wister's study.

The journals were donated to the University of Wyoming, and they now form the core of the Owen Wister Papers at the American Heritage Center. Mrs. Stokes edited and published some of them as *Owen Wister Out West* in 1958. In the introduction, reflecting on *The Virginian* she wrote:

Its hero was the first cowboy to capture the public's imagination... Before this, cowboys had been depicted as murderous thugs. The Virginian was utterly different... Because of him, little boys wear ten-gallon hats and carry toy pistols... We still have Western stories, Western movies, and Western radio and television drama in which the cowboy hero defends justice and his girl's honor and shoots it out with the villain. *The Virginian* stands among the ten best-selling novels of the past fifty years. It was written as fiction but has become history.¹

In the 1950s, when this was written, the popularity of the Western was just about at its peak. There were, in fact, no less than twenty-nine Western series on television in 1958.² Mrs. Stokes, in my opinion, overstates Wister's role in creating the cowboy as hero; but no one who has ever watched Matt Dillon gun down his opponent at high noon on the main street of Dodge City in the opening sequence of *Gunslinger* is likely to deny that Wister had an impact. Mrs. Stokes's second and even more grandio-

ose statement that Wister's "fiction has become history," however, it is partly the aim of this paper to affirm.

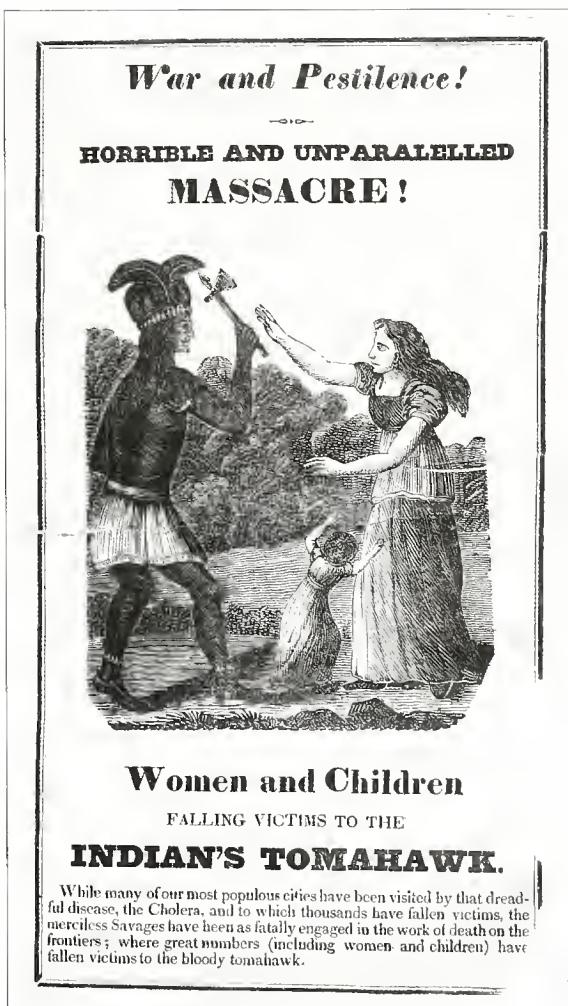
Modern scholarship has begun to explore the inter-relations between history and myth; and what we have discovered is that myth affects history as much as history affects myth. The myths that people believe in influence and shape their actions; and the myth of the heroic cowboy has had an impact on our view of ourselves as Americans for as long as that myth has existed.

Mrs. Stokes is correct in pointing out that the original heroes of European civilization in America were not cowboys. The figure of the heroic cowboy is actually superimposed on an older Euro-American myth: the

Wild West. The Wild West was born when the first European ships set out across the Atlantic. West was the direction of the unknown, the unknown is always dangerous, and, to Europeans, dangerous was equated with wild. The settlers came armed and prepared for danger and violence, and they found what they were looking for.

And here I would like to point out that, although myth is a word that is often used to denote something that is untrue, that is not strictly the sense in which I am using it. By myth, I mean a belief or assumption accepted without proof, which may turn out to be either true or false when acted on. Any myth that is found to be consistently false is apt to be discarded.

At any rate, the European settlers came prepared for conflict with the people already inhabiting the land, conflict occurred, and so the myth, having proved true on application, survived and was strengthened. Indian-white conflicts became a staple not only of each new westward expansion but also of popular literature. Captivity narratives, stories of Indian attacks and of the escape of heroic white survivors, began to be



¹Fanny Kemble Wister (ed.), *Owen Wister Out West His Letters and Journals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 2, 24-26.

²Mike Flanagan, *Days of the West* (Frederick, Colorado: Renaissance House, 1987), 191-193.



published in the 1600s and new stories continued to be added to the lexicon until at least the 1870s.³ The appeal of these stories was always that they were true; and under the influence of such stories, travelers on the Oregon and California Trails in the mid-1800s always set out heavily armed and determined not to let themselves or their loved ones fall prey to the terrific tortures that the narratives assured them that Indians practiced.

Statistics regarding mortality along the emigrant trails are uncertain and controversial, and they are necessarily heavily based on the anecdotal evidence found in surviving journals and letters. But one source estimates that careless mishandling of firearms was the leading cause of accidental death on the trail. Another source places drownings first and shootings second. A third writer concludes from these estimates, "The evidence shows that the abundant emigrant weaponry actually increased the risks involved in an overland journey."⁴ On the other hand, authenticated Indian attacks did occur, and some travelers were captured or killed by Indians, so the belief in danger from Indians survived as a lively part of the western myth.

Curiously, because it survived, it tended to survive whole. When I was a child, I remember picking up a western novel set on the Oregon Trail on the cover of which was a hapless blonde girl tied to a stake in the middle of the plains. The writer, or at any rate the illustrator, apparently was not aware that the western Indians, unlike the eastern woodland peoples, did not practice ritual captive torture. Nevertheless, it should have occurred to somebody that burning at the stake is an unlikely pastime for any culture accustomed to living on a tree-challenged prairie.

Absurdities of this sort, however, are unimportant when they occur in stories that everybody accepts as fiction. The tendency of the emigrants to shoot themselves and each other, in mistake for marauding Indians, is more problematic. But occasionally the myth became dysfunctional enough to be truly dangerous. In August 1854, near Fort Laramie, a cow strayed away from an emigrant train and was shot and butchered by a small group of Miniconjou Sioux who were camped with a larger group of Brûlé Sioux. The owner of the cow complained of his loss to the commander of the

post when the train reached the fort. The commander sent a young second lieutenant, John L. Grattan, newly-graduated from West Point and inexperienced in the West, with a detail of twenty-nine men and two howitzers to arrest the accused Indians. The leading man of the Brûlé village, Brave Bear, tried to negotiate between Grattan and the Sioux; but the Indians did not understand the concept of arrest followed by inquiry and trial, and Grattan knew little about Indians other than the myths of hostility and cowardice that were current in the popular literature of his day. He ordered his men to fire, probably intending at first only to intimidate the Indians into

³Josephine Meeker's 1879 captivity among the White River Utes may have been the last classic Indian captivity narrative. For a good selection of captivity narratives see Frederick Drimmer (ed.), *Captured by the Indians: 15 Firsthand Accounts, 1750-1870* (New York: Dover Publications, 1985).

⁴James E. Potter, "Firearms on the Overland Trails," *Overland Journal*, 9 (1991), 2, 9. The two sources Potter cites are: Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), 90, and John D. Unruh, Jr., *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 347.

cooperation. The Indians returned fire; the howitzers were discharged but did little damage since they were aimed into the air; Brave Bear was mortally wounded; Grattan and the 28 men with him were killed before they could retreat to the fort; and relations between the Sioux and the military were permanently damaged.⁵

The interpreters of history or, if I may use the word in this context, the myth-makers have not been kind to Lt. Grattan, who is generally given the blame for misunderstanding and mishandling the situation; but to understand the whole truth of what happened and why it happened, it would really be necessary to examine the myths which existed in the minds of the Indians involved as well. The point of the anecdote, as I am using it, however, is to demonstrate that history evolves into myth, that myth tends to simplify and petrify the original facts, and that these simplifications can, in turn, affect history.

At this point, I need to return to the myth of the cowboy. As I mentioned previously, Owen Wister did not create the first cowboy hero. The heroic cowboy was a literary contrivance built on the figure of the heroic frontiersman. It was a natural extension, since Anglo-Americans first encountered the cowboy in Texas, as an exotic figure of Mexican origin; and Texas was where one of the greatest of the heroic frontiersmen, Davy Crockett, ended his career. The association of frontiersman and cowboy continued in the public mind with the partnership of Buffalo Bill Cody and Texas Jack Omohundro in the 1870s. Both Cody and Omohundro were engaged in recasting the reality of their lives into mythic form, and, again, their appeal to the public lay in the belief

that there was truth, or at least some truth, in the romances they created to entertain their audiences. In 1877 Texas Jack published his life story in a national periodical called *Spirit of the Times*:

"As the general trade on the range has often been written of," he asserts there, "I'll simply refer to a few incidents of a trip over the plains." He then offers this description of a stampede: "If them quadrupeds don't go insane, turn tail to the storm, and strike out for civil and religious liberty, then I don't know what strike out means...this is the cowboy's ride with Texas five hundred miles away, and them steers steering straight for him; night time, darker than the word means, hog wallows, prairie dog, wolf and badger holes, ravines and precipices ahead, and if you do your duty three thousand stampeding steers behind. If your horse don't swap ends, and you hang on them till daylight, you can bless your lucky stars."⁶

Omohundro died in Leadville, Colorado, in 1880, but Texas Jack had adventures for the next twenty years in dime novels written by Ned Buntline and Prentiss Ingraham, although these later stories drew little or nothing from the hero's actual life.⁷

The cowboy, like the frontiersman, was very much an American hero: a hero of the common man. In the popular fiction which he inhabited, he generally spoke a slangy, if not absolutely ungrammatical, English, and he presented an absurd and comical figure if he was ever introduced to an eastern city. Still, by the later decades of the nineteenth century, the cowboy had become a figure of virility, self-assurance, and romance whose courage, if not his manners, were admired by American youth concerned that civilization

and a lack of Indian threats were making them soft, diffident, and unmanly.

The most famous of the effete young men who sought redemption by migrating to a cattle ranch was New Yorker Theodore Roosevelt, who lived and ranched for a time in North Dakota, and who published in 1888 an account of cowboy life in the West called *Ranch Life and the Hunting-Trail*, copiously illustrated by his friend and fellow New Yorker, Frederic Remington. Roosevelt's stirring account of his life in the west emphasized encounters with outlaws and wild game, and he was full of praise for the cowboy, whose character and antecedents he sketched. Roosevelt claimed that, although cowboys were drawn from all over the country, most of them and the best of them were southerners.

"For cowboy work there is need of special traits," he wrote, "...and young Easterners should be sure of themselves before trying it: the struggle for existence is very keen in the far West, and it is no place for men who lack the ruder, coarser virtues and physical qualities, no matter how intellectual or how refined and delicate their sensibilities."⁸

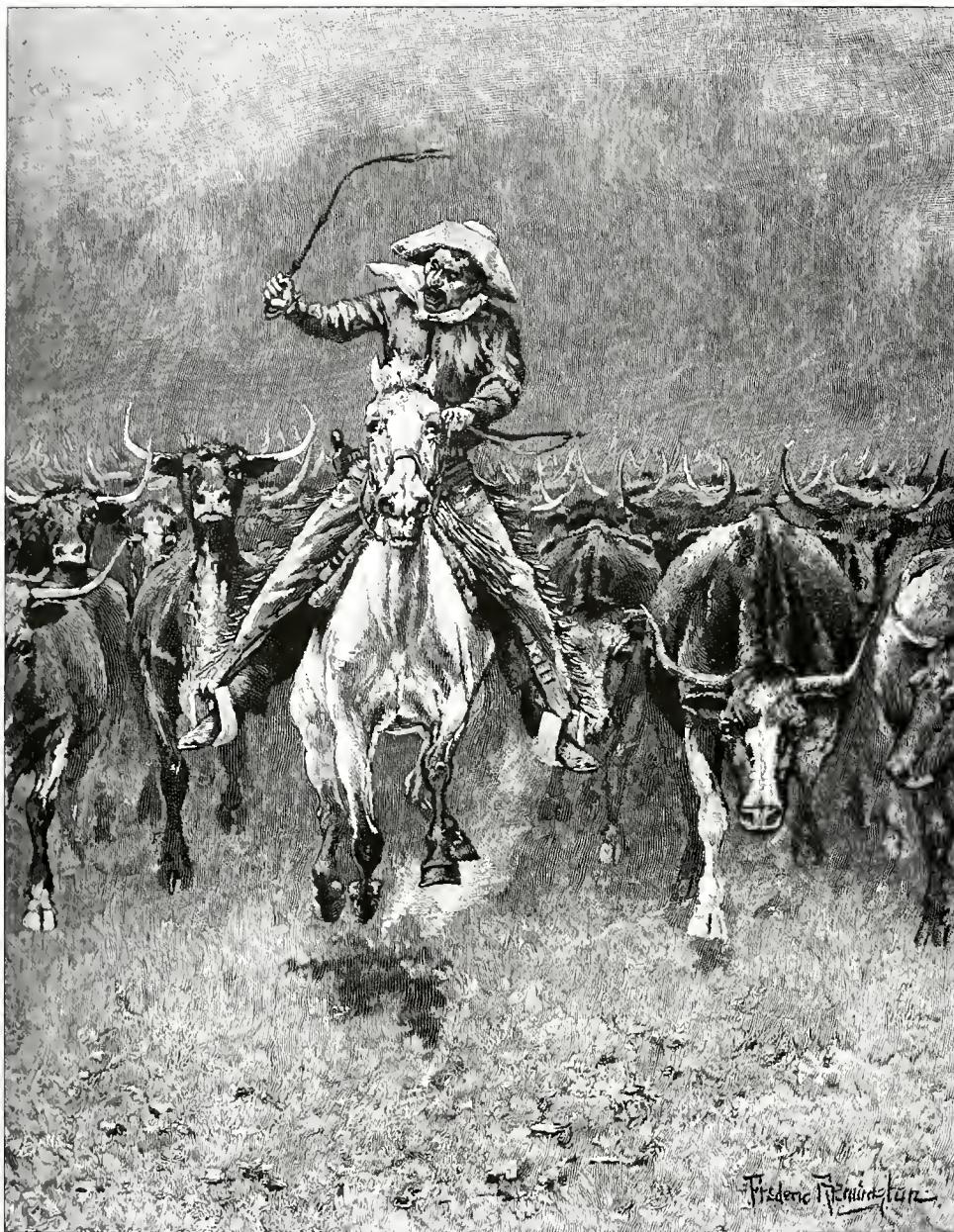
One of the young easterners who sought health and manhood in the west during this decade was Owen Wister, who came to Wyoming from Philadelphia in 1885. Like Roosevelt,

⁵George E. Hyde, *Spotted Tail's Folk: A History of the Brule 'Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 3rd Printing, 1979), 58-70.

⁶Herschel C. Logan, *Buckskin and Satin: The Life of Texas Jack* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Company, 1954), 28-30.

⁷*Ibid.*, 156-170, 186.

⁸Theodore Roosevelt, *Ranch Life and the Hunting-Trail* (Time Life Books 1981 reprint of New York: The Century Company, 1888), 10.



From Theodore Roosevelt, *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail*. (New York: Century Co., 1899), 69.

he lived on a cattle ranch. In fact, he stayed at Frank Wolcott's ranch near Glenrock; but Roosevelt's influence on his work is frankly acknowledged by himself. In *Roosevelt, the Story of a Friendship*, Wister related how he was partly inspired by Roosevelt's published writings to undertake the western-themed fiction which he eventually turned into *The Virginian*.⁹ Although Wister marketed his stories as fiction, he drew much of the background and some incidents from his own observations, and it is this

aura of reality that has helped the book to retain its importance through the years.

Wister was a much better writer than Ned Buntline or Prentiss Ingraham, who had imagined absurd adventures for Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack in the dime novel literature of Wister's youth, and I will not assert that he drew much directly from those sources. Wister repeated, however, some of elements of that less reputable fiction, particularly the brave cowboy comfortably at home in a world of conflict and violence.

In Wister's story, the western hero is not a comic figure out of his own element, however; and the violence, instead of being constant and endemic, is carefully constructed to erupt in an ultimate inevitable climax. Wister, in fact, invented the showdown.

In the figure of Molly Wood, Wister embodied the east and eastern culture and equated pacifism

⁹Cited in Wister, *Owen Wister Out West*, 11-12.

with the feminine. In the figure of his hero, he explored what it takes to be a man. To be a man, in Wister's world, it was necessary, as Roosevelt had asserted, to be sure of oneself. It was necessary to recognize what was right and what should be done, and to do it even in the face of overwhelming social pressure. It was necessary to resort to violence even though civilization condemned violence. To avoid violence was womanly. None of this was Wister's sole creation, but because he wrote well, and because he wrote for an elite audience of literate intellectuals, his special spin on the cowboy myth had enormous influence in the development of subsequent literature. Wister did not really create the western genre, but he infused new life into it, made it respectable, and sent it into the twentieth century vigorous and proud.

In order for a myth to have influence, it has to feel true, morally true if not literally true, to a large number of people. *The Virginian* had that appeal. It has remained constantly in print. It was filmed several times and was recently resurrected as a TV movie on TNT. Elements of the book appeared over and over again thinly disguised in other people's works: the cowboy and the schoolmarm, the lynched rustler, the tenderfoot from the East, nearly every character Wister created had adventures under other names in other films and books; but it was the final showdown between good man and bad man that became the leading cliché of western literature. It is the figure of the man standing for his beliefs alone against strong pressure that is Wister's most enduring legacy to the myth.

It happens, however, that it was this element that drew least from Wister's experience and most from his imagination. In the West of real-

ity there were no formal duels between good and evil, chaos and order, or "quality" and "equality," as Wister described his two antagonists.¹⁰ supporting a class system which rapidly disappeared and which had little influence on later westerns. Wister's heirs, writers like Zane Grey, Max Brand, and Louis L'Amour, discarded the parts of his fable that felt untrue or unnecessary to them. As with the captivity narratives and early stories of cowboy life, when new writers stepped in to continue the tradition, they were quick to abandon mere facts or anything that felt discordant to popular views. Myth searches for underlying truths. Its purpose is not to record history.

That, at least, was the belief of Max Brand, who was particularly influential in this trend. Although born in Seattle and educated in California, Frederick Schiller Faust, who used the pen name Max Brand, wrote much of his voluminous western fiction in Florence, Italy; and he made no secret of the fact that he drew his inspiration from Greek and Roman myth rather than from American history.¹¹ Other writers followed suit. Most of them, like their predecessors Ned Buntline and Prentiss Ingraham, made a living churning out popular fiction at so much a word, and they had no time for research. Readers didn't quite see it the same way. They still tended to equate truth with reality; but since most of them were neither westerners nor historians, and since the new stories were still being set in an increasingly remote past, they largely failed to notice as the western became more and more disconnected from the 1880s West that Wister had known.

Westerns grew in popularity through most of the twentieth century and peaked during World War II and the Cold War. By the 1950s

the world of the western was as richly imagined, and as far from reality, as the court of Camelot. The western began to decline in popularity late in the 1960s, at the same time that the Vietnam conflict began to discredit war as a solution to world problems; but although westerns have ceased to be the dominant form of popular culture, they have not disappeared, and the thesis at the center of Roosevelt's and Wister's philosophies: that manliness requires a willingness to resort to violence, has survived intact and has largely transcended the western genre.

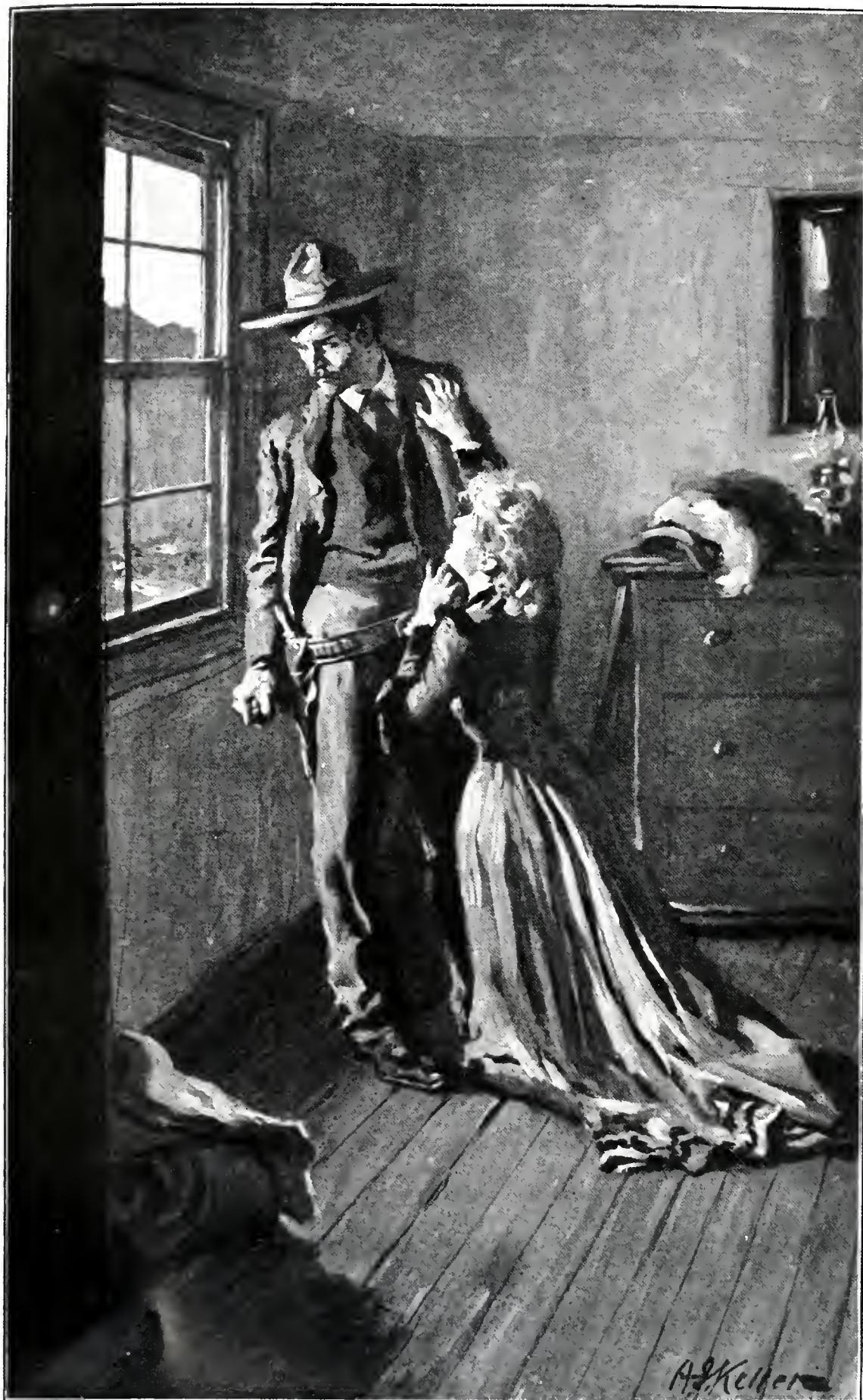
On the night of October 6, 1998, a young gay student at the University of Wyoming named Matthew Shepard left a local bar with two other young Laramie residents, Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney. Shepard was found tied to a fence and badly beaten the next day. He died of his injuries five days later. Henderson and McKinney were arrested for the murder. So were their girlfriends, who had helped them dispose of evidence linking them to the crime.¹²

I was living in Laramie at the time, and, like many of the townsfolk, I was shocked and saddened, when I first read the news, by the destruction wrought in five young lives, all of them destroyed or forever altered by an apparently pointless act: but Laramie had been shocked and saddened by tragedy before and would

¹⁰ Owen Wister, *The Virginian* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1944), 147-202.

¹¹ Robert Easton, *Max Brand: The Big Westerner* (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 1970), vii, 66-67, 113-128.

¹² *Laramie Daily Boomerang*, October 9-13, 1998, in Matthew Shepard Collection, Accession Number 300014, Box 5, Folders 1-2, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.



be again. Yet other crimes committed here had brought no hordes of national reporters into our town, and no international wire services had advertised us to the world as a place that could not keep its citizens safe.

So I naturally wondered: what was it about this crime that attracted national attention? Why did this story, particularly, evolve into multiple movies of the week, some of which had as little connection to reality as Buffalo Bill's or Texas Jack's narratives of their Indian-fighting days? Why is it that the Shepard murder seems poised to become one of those historical events that morphs into myth?

One of the few really insightful pieces of journalism to come out of the media attention was written by JoAnn Wypijewski and published in *Harper's Magazine* in September, 1999. Wypijewski focused her piece on the psychology of Matt's killers. She suggested that they shared a particular trait in common with the Columbine killers and with many other young villains of recent crimes. They were not the school bullies, they were the kids that the school bullies bullied. In fact, she concluded, "[i]t's $\frac{1}{4}$ possible that Matthew Shepard didn't die because he was gay: he died because Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson are straight."¹³ Her implication is that the killers felt they were proving their manhood by beating a gay man so severely as to cause death.

Wypijewski was also struck by the extent to which Laramie identified itself with the cowboy myth, and, certainly, if you take a walk downtown, you will encounter many proud displays of westernness there from the Cowboy Bar to the oversize horseshoes recently painted on the sidewalks; and since Laramie is not quite a tourist mecca, it is presumably the locals who are supposed to be enticed by this advertising.

Wypijewski also brought into the mix the kind of religion, and it certainly exists here in Laramie, which teaches that homosexuality is a biblically-condemned sin.¹⁴ So long as we teach our children to solve problems with violence, she implies, and so long as we teach our children that homosexuality is a problem, some of our children will seek to solve homosexuality with violence, and we must embrace the Shepard murder as the logical result of such teachings.

And this is where the Virginian meets Matt Shepard. Clearly, it would be ridiculous, however typical of myth-making, to reduce this argument to an insistence that little boys who wear ten-gallon hats and carry toy pistols will grow up to be murderers. It is not the little boys who grow up, no matter what they have worn or what they have read or what they have watched on television, who commit the crimes that shock the nation. It is the little boys who can't grow up. It is the ones who somehow lose their way on the road through adolescence to emotional maturity. These are the ones who draw their role models from fiction and myth and who seem unable to check these models against reality.

But if the Shepard case is, in a sense, a new chapter in the cowboy myth, it may also have some common ground with the story of Lt. Grattan. Grattan entered myth from history as the stereotypical example of how a fixed and unquestioned idea of Indian hostility can create disaster. The Shepard case may stand to the future as an example of how a fixed and unquestioned belief that violence is to be equated with masculinity can pass from a myth to a real-life tragedy.

As I pointed out earlier, myth tends to simplify and, finally, to pet-

rify; and the more remote it becomes from the events that inspired it, the more likely it is to lapse into absurdity. The publication of *The Virginian* and the death of Matt Shepard bracket the twentieth century. The myth had nearly a hundred years to simplify and petrify, and it is hardly Wister's fault if some of the ideals that he championed in 1902 seem less admirable to us now. Cultures change and myths need to change with them. It seems reasonable to propose that in the twenty-first century we will create new myths by drawing inspiration from new experiences, and that we will condemn the absurdities of our past myths and discard those that no longer feel true. Whether the heroic cowboy finds his way onto the discard pile or is reincarnated to a new life in another generation, probably depends on the talents of those gifted story-tellers of the future who are able, as Owen Wister did one hundred years ago, to create fables which appeal, which feel true on some level, to the culture at large.

¹³ JoAnn Wypijewski, "A Boy's Life: For Matthew Shepard's Killers, What Does It Take To Pass As A Man," *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1999, 61-74, in Matthew Shepard Collection, Box 6, Folder 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

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Fort Laramie--After the Army: Part III, Preservation

By Douglas C. McChristian



Wyoming State Archives, Dept. of State Parks and Cultural Resources

Fort Laramie in the 1930s

This article is the third and final installment of the story of Fort Laramie in the years after it ceased service as an army post in 1890. The first segment, "The Auction," was published in Annals, Summer 2001. The second portion, "The Community," appeared in the Autumn 2001 issue of Annals.

The twentieth century dawned on a Fort Laramie that was but a mere skeleton of the once proud military post. The decade following abandonment had witnessed the wholesale destruction of most of the principal buildings and virtually all of the minor ones. Where dozens of buildings had once stood, only foundations or stark ruins remained. Those few buildings still more or less intact at that time would remain comparatively unchanged in subsequent decades because the owners found practical uses for them.

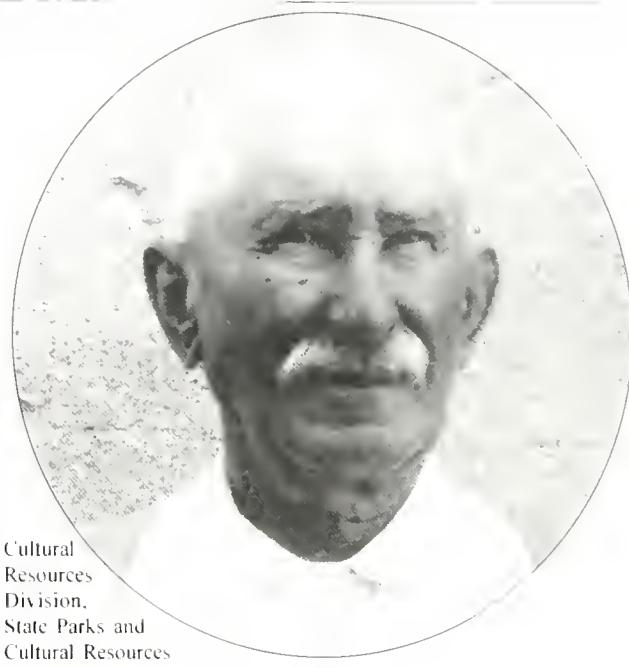
Although later preservationists would lament the razing of the fort buildings, no one at the time, with the possible exception of John Hunton, gave the slightest thought to saving them for posterity. Frontier military posts were by no means unique in 1890. The people in the vicinity were still too close to the reality of the post's army days to be concerned, much less have any ro-

mantic notions about the West. Many of them, in fact, had worked on the post or lived in the area for some time. It would have been inconceivable to most that anyone in the future would find the whole thing of any interest, much the way citizens today view abandoned military bases. Everyone was too preoccupied with the everyday struggles of life to indulge in nostalgia. The editor of the *Cheyenne Daily Leader* probably came as close as anyone when he referred to "the historical post a veritable deserted village."¹ The only interest shown in the buildings was what they might be able to provide in materials to construct new buildings on homesteads, ranches, and in towns throughout the region.

It may be speculated that John Hunton had some higher purpose in mind when he bought so many of the military buildings. That he intended to sell at least some of his buildings for salvage purposes, however, is reflected in his own statements.² When his business as post trader failed as a result of the army's departure, it plunged him into personal financial loss that probably even he had not foreseen at the time of the auction. Any thoughts he may have entertained for "preserving" some of the army structures, were dismissed in the face of his own financial crisis. Accordingly, he sold many of his buildings during the next two years, with no apparent remorse. He needed cash, and needed it badly when his creditors hounded him to settle his accounts. Writing to a friend, Hunton admitted, "I am dead broke and have been sold out by the sheriff...."³

Still, one must question the inconsistencies in Hunton's treatment of the buildings he owned. Some--like Old Bedlam, the Trader's Store, and the two officers quarters standing between them--seemed to be inviolable. Certainly, one of his motives was that these buildings stood on a parcel of land that he planned to homestead, and eventually did acquire by purchase. Most of the others were on tracts later filed on by his neighbors, Joe and Mary Wilde and Hattie Sandereock. As noted in the previous article (see "Fort Laramie After the Army: Part II, The Community," *Annals of Wyoming*, Autumn 2001), B. A. Hart initially acquired the northwest quarter of Section 28, where several of Hunton's buildings stood. The division of these lands may have been a "gentleman's agreement," though no evidence has been found to indicate that was the case. Whatever the reason, Hunton divested himself of the buildings through sale or salvage within a short time after the post reservation was opened to homesteading.

Hunton lacked the money to maintain the row of buildings on the west side of the parade ground, but he nevertheless saw to it that they were spared from destruction. Bedlam, in particular, seems to have held a spe-



cial, if not sentimental, place with him. This largest of frame buildings contained more lumber than perhaps any other building on the post, yet he did not sell it, nor did he permit the use of it by anyone, except to rent a room to the school district for several years. The Burt House was his personal residence for as long as he lived at the fort, while the so-called Surgeon's Quarters next door was used for storage, with a room or two infrequently being rented to tenants.

Hunton might have had a perfect opportunity to continue a general merchandise business and even a saloon--the store building contained two of them in ready condition--had it not been for his indebtedness and the fear that his creditors would seize the assets of any new enterprise he might start. While this may not fully explain his apparent lack of initiative, it is the only reason that can be attributed to his decision not to revive his business. Others, notably Joe Wilde, operated successful businesses at the old post for many years afterward. Thus, the cluster of Hunton buildings stood neglected, and largely unused for any commercial purposes, yet he did not sell them or salvage them himself. Hunton's true intentions remain an enigma.

¹ "Old Fort Laramie," *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, March 25, 1890.

² In the two days before the auction, Hunton measured buildings and estimated how much lumber they contained. Entries April 7 and 8, Hunton Diary, 1890, typescript in Box 3, Accession No. 9, John Hunton Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyo. (hereinafter cited as Hunton Diary with year).

³ Hunton to T. P. McColley, Fort Robinson, Neb., December 2, 1891, Hunton Letters, copies in Mattes Collection, Archives, Fort Laramie National Historic Site (hereinafter cited as Hunton Letters, Mattes Collection).

The historic preservation movement in the United States was still in its infancy at the turn of the century. There had been isolated instances of concern for saving historic buildings from destruction in the East as early as 1816, with the rescue of the Old State House in Philadelphia. Later efforts included the identification of a building in New York formerly used as a headquarters by General George Washington and the appropriation of funds by that state's legislature to preserve it. In 1853 a group of patriotic women organized to save Mount Vernon. Later, in the 1870s and 1880s, there was a burgeoning interest in the preservation of Colonial houses. Most of these early efforts, characterized by one historian as "patriotic fervor," transcended from the historical personages with which the buildings were associated, not as the result of any concern for their intrinsic values as examples of architectural types or their association with national historical themes.⁴

Although interest in historic preservation was flourishing in the East during the 1890s, it was only beginning to take root west of the Mississippi. Anglo-American occupancy of the region was comparatively recent and, despite the Census Bureau's pronouncement that the frontier line was no longer discernible by 1890, much of the western United States was still unsettled. There was little interest in preservation in the West, with the exception of a developing concern by archeologists for some prehistoric Native American and other archeo-

logical sites in the southwestern territories. An example was the setting aside of the ruins at Casa Grande, in southern Arizona, in 1889. However, most people in the West were occupied with building the new civilization and exploiting the abundance of natural resources it had to offer. While some of the aging frontiersmen may have lamented the passing of the Old West, few people had any interest in philanthropic efforts aimed at saving buildings or sites purely for historical reasons.

America may have experienced a latent social awareness of historic properties, compared with European nations, but concern emerged nevertheless. The Civil War produced widespread popular support for the establishment and maintenance of national cemeteries. Veterans' groups, like the Grand Army of the Republic, proved to be powerful lobbyists in Congress. Since many of these cemeteries were located on the battlefields of that conflict, the federal government began reserving such tracts under the administration of the War Department. Aside from the battlefields and their associated cemeteries, however, the preservation movement remained centered in the private sector.

By the end of the nineteenth century, one author contends, "not only were we as a people using historic shrines to assert our legitimacy in an international community

⁴ William Murtaugh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), 26-30.



The State of Wyoming became involved in placing Oregon Trail markers in the years before World War I. Pictured is the dedication of a marker near Douglas on Sept. 20, 1913.

of venerable nations, but also, as individuals and groups, we looked to associative history for reassurance."⁵ In 1906 Congress passed the Antiquities Act, the first comprehensive federal legislation for the purpose of reserving as national monuments, 'historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest."⁶ This legislation was a reflection of President Theodore Roosevelt's obsession for conserving what he considered to be some of America's greatest cultural treasures. The weakness of the law lay in its limitation to properties either already owned or donated to the U.S. Government. It nevertheless was important for demonstrating federal interest in land conservation and preservation of cultural resources. Of equal importance, the Antiquities Act laid the groundwork for the extension of an entire system of such reserves and, ten years later, the creation of an agency to administer the sites--the National Park Service.

That same year, coincidentally, Ezra Meeker, who had migrated to California on the Oregon Trail in 1852, recrossed the trail in a personal commemoration of that event. In staging his tribute to the thousands of emigrants who had passed over the combined Oregon-California and Mormon Trails in the mid-nineteenth century, Meeker drove one of his original wagons, drawn by a team of oxen. During his journey from Puget Sound, Washington, to Independence, Missouri, Meeker drew attention to a need for marking the route of the emigrant trail before it was entirely obliterated.

An example confirming his worst fears was Fort Laramie. Meeker was appalled by what he found. "The old place is crumbling away, slowly disappearing with the memories of the past," he despaired. The old pioneer observed, correctly, that there was little evidence of the post he had seen over a half-century earlier. In fact, he said, the ruins visible in 1906 did not represent a fort at all, "but an encampment."⁷ Meeker's impression reflected the fact that most frontier army posts had no stockades, therefore, they more closely resembled villages than fortifications.

Meeker's nostalgic revisiting of the Oregon Trail spurred him to an even greater effort the next year, when he traversed the nation in his wagon, all the way to Washington, D. C., where he urged Congress to officially mark the route. Not surprisingly, his efforts to attract federal involvement failed. The United States had a deeply rooted tradition in relying on "private initiative in most areas of social concern."⁸ Although the War Department oversaw national cemeteries and battlefields, it drew the line there. Virtually all of the eastern historic house museums associated with the

nation's founders and leaders, were privately owned and operated. Meeker's campaign served the purpose, however, by sparking local groups in the West to heed his message. Whereas he had discovered only 22 markers along the Oregon Trail the first time he retraced it by 1908 there were more than 150.⁹

Interest in memorializing the emigrant route across Nebraska and Wyoming grew rapidly. Despite Wyoming's relatively recent statehood and its still sparse population, it emerged as a leader in efforts to mark the Oregon Trail, as well as in identifying and erecting monuments at numerous other historic sites within its own boundaries. Whether they were conscious of it or not, Meeker and his disciples were expressing a connection of the past with the present-associative history--lest that anchor be lost. As one historian observed, "Historical marking wasn't a science; it was more an instinct, something that some individuals bore inside themselves."¹⁰

Even John Hunton felt compelled to take action when he wrote to the Secretary of War in 1910 suggesting that, "a small monument should be erected at the site of the immense immigration trail or road which is very rapidly passing out of recognizable existence."¹¹ Back in 1891, when an army detail returned to the fort to retrieve the soldiers' remains from the post cemetery, Hunton had called their attention to the mass grave at the Grattan Battlefield. Now, nearly 20 years later, he thought it was appropriate to place a monument marking the famed trail, which passed close by the scene of the 1854 skirmish.¹²

The preservation movement nationwide became characterized by two elements--patriotism bordering on religious zealotry, and women most often assuming the leadership roles. The Wyoming preservation effort followed the national trend. The seeds that Ezra Meeker sowed fell on fertile ground in the state chapter of the

⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁶ Barry Mackintosh, "The Historic Sites Survey and National Landmarks Program: A History" (Washington, D. C.: National Park Service, 1985), 1. (hereinafter cited as "Historic Sites Survey").

⁷ Meeker, perhaps without knowing, summed up the structural evolution of the post from a walled trading post to the scattered array of buildings typical of most western army posts. Mike Jording, *A Few Interested Residents: Wyoming Historical Markers & Monuments* (Newcastle: 1992), 3. (hereinafter cited as *A Few Interested Residents*).

⁸ Mackintosh, *Historic Sites Survey*, p.1.

⁹ Jording, *A Few Interested Residents*, p.1.

¹⁰ Jording, *A Few Interested Residents*, p.1

¹¹ Hunton to Senator F. E. Warren, June 15, 1910, Hunton Letters, Mattes Collection.

¹² This marker was not placed until 1916. Grace Raymond Hebard to Hunton, July 18, 1916. *ibid*.



American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard speaking at the dedication of a marker.

Daughters of the American Revolution [DAR]. The group initiated a program to raise money and erect markers along the trail as early as 1908 and just five years later installed an imposing monument where the emigrant route entered the state near Henry, Nebraska.

Also in 1913, the D. A. R. introduced a bill in the state legislature petitioning for funds to further their efforts. The legislature not only made an appropriation of \$2,500 for that purpose, but established an Oregon Trail Commission [OTC] to administer a landmarks program statewide. The first three-member committee was headed by Mrs. H. B. Patten, then state regent for the DAR. When Patten and her husband left the state to go to Washington, D.C., her successor to both positions was Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard, noted Wyoming historian and member of the faculty at the University of Wyoming since 1909. Hebard headed the DAR and the OTC from 1914-1915 and continued to serve as secretary of the latter until 1921.¹³

Those were busy years for the members of the Trail Commission, thanks to the strong support of the Wyo-

ming Legislature. Each year, it routinely appropriated \$500 for their work. During the period from 1913 to 1916, the OTC marked nearly 50 historic sites in the state, only two or three of which were not associated with the Oregon Trail. Among the important places identified by Dr. Hebard were several frontier military posts, including Fort Laramie. Such monuments, she said, were necessary "to do honor to those who endured hardships and privations, encountered dangers and peril, who gave up their lives to make possible the civilization of the great west."¹⁴

Mrs. Patten contacted John Hunton in 1913 with a proposal for erecting a significant monument at the fort as part of their project to memorialize the trail. Enthused with the idea, Hunton responded that he had spoken with his old friend and neighbor Joe Wilde, who agreed to donate the cement, or \$25 toward the purchase of it. Other old-timers expressed their willingness to support the effort, mainly with labor. Patten therefore arranged to have a bronze tablet cast bearing the inscription,

FORT LARAMIE A MILITARY POST ON THE OREGON TRAIL, JUNE 16, 1849- MARCH 2, 1890. THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED BY THE STATE OF WYOMING AND A FEW INTERESTED RESIDENTS.

However, when the plaque failed to arrive by October, Hunton wrote to Mrs. Patten suggesting that the construction of the monument be postponed until spring to ensure that the concrete would cure properly. The tablet was delivered later and Hunton stored it until warm weather returned.

About the first of June 1914, Hunton assembled a crew of volunteer workmen composed of Mead and George Sandercock, soldier's son John O'Brian, and Joseph L. Wolf, proprietor of a dry goods



Oregon Trail marker erected in 1913 in western Wyoming

¹³ Jording, *A Few Interested Residents*, 5-7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

and grocery store in New Fort Laramie. A man named Hisey was paid to do the concrete work, although he, too, donated an additional day of his time to complete the project. Hunton proudly announced that he and his "few interested residents" finished the monument on June 6. "We have a very substantial structure 6' x 6' square at base, tapering to 2' x 2' at top and 12' high," he reported to State Engineer and OTC member A. J. Parshall.¹⁵ The monument was strategically placed a few feet northeast of the Post Trader's Store, a place Hunton knew had been a key historical road intersection at the fort.

No action was taken to formally dedicate the monument until 1915. That spring, Dr. Hebard mobilized her sisters of the DAR, including Blanche Hunton, to coordinate special ceremonies for the unveiling of the Fort Laramie monument and two other Oregon Trail markers, one at Lingle and one at Torrington. Although the planners experienced some unavoidable delays, the day was finally set for June 17.

Late that morning, ex-Governor Joseph M. Carey, Hebard, and other dignitaries delivered fervent speeches reflective of the times relating to the opening of the West, praising "the men who wrested these broad acres from the Indians," and the many sacrifices made by the pioneers. Then, before a large crowd and to the strains of the Torrington band, Mrs. Hunton, who arranged to be home at the time, drew the American flag from the Fort Laramie monument. The *Torrington Telegram* proudly proclaimed that the day would, "ever remind

the passing generations that people living in 1914-15 were appreciative of the work done along the trail and on into the West, from 1810 on down to the present time."¹⁶

Echoing the preservation philosophy prevalent in the late nineteenth century, the speakers typically praised the spirit and courage of those who had "settled the West," yet not one proposed that the venerable old post itself be preserved for those future generations. Certainly, John Hunton did not speak up, since he had been a central figure in destroying much of it. Even Hebard said only that, "The part that Fort Laramie has taken in helping to execute this trust makes us today, with reverence and sacred memory place a monument on the spot, that more than any other place in the great West contributed to a successful and triumphant march of Western development and expansion."¹⁷ There was, to be sure, a sense of place and its thematic association with the westward movement. Yet, typifying the times, the monument, not the doomed structures, was perceived as the permanent reminder of Fort Laramie.

In more recent decades, both federal and state governments have become involved in identifying and recommending the preservation of historic sites. Yet, many such efforts began at the grass roots with individual

¹⁵ Hunton to A. S. Parshall, Cheyenne, Wyo., July 18, 1914, Hunton Letters, Mattes Collection.

¹⁶ "Big Outing Day Thur," *Torrington Telegram*, June 17, 1915.

¹⁷ "Significance of Fort Laramie On the Oregon Trail," *Torrington Telegram*, June 24, 1915.

American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming



Members of the Historical Landmarks Commission and other officials pose in front of a fort structure in this photograph taken in the 1930s.

citizens. In this instance, the concept of saving the physical remnants of Fort Laramie began with James Johnston, editor of the *Torrington Telegram*. The ceremonies lighted a patriotic fire in Johnston. "Few people realize the importance of Fort Laramie as a historic spot in Wyoming," Johnston wrote, "and to think that the site of the first fort in the state lies within the borders of our own county ought to arouse the patriotism of the present generation to restore the works and make it into a beautiful resort." Betraying a naiveté about the complexities of such an undertaking, Johnston enthusiastically recommended that, "There are a dozen or more of the old buildings intact, and can be put in shape for use at a very little cost."¹⁸ He added that because the fort was convenient to Wheatland, Guernsey, and Torrington, it made a wonderful spot for picnics and other social gatherings.

Johnston's plea failed to spark any immediate response in the local populace. Hebard, apparently satisfied that the needs of preservation had been met, did not step forward on behalf of the State of Wyoming to champion the cause of saving the buildings. Historian Merrill J. Mattes later interpreted this to mean that, "because it was inconceivable that any agency would preserve an old fort solely as an historical park, all early proposals revolved around various pragmatic uses."¹⁹ While these ideas may not have met the modern criteria of preservation, they were nevertheless aimed in that direction. The event surrounding the erection of the monument served to awaken wider interest in "doing something" with the fort.

The editor of the Nebraska-based *Midwest Magazine*, Will M. Maupin, advanced another concept, no doubt inspired by the war in Europe. After having attended a Wilde dance there in 1914, Maupin saw the old fort as ideally suited for a military school. The historic buildings could be restored, apparently to serve as a reminder of the nation's heritage, while the school itself would consist of newly-constructed buildings on the grounds. To promote the idea, he proposed a grand picnic at the fort on Independence Day, 1916. This was not intended to be a July Fourth celebration, as such, but simply an informal public get-together "not only to give old-timers a chance to meet, but to talk over the possibility of getting the Government to establish a military school at the Old Fort."²⁰

The festive day included picnicking on the grounds, wrestling matches, baseball, and a speech by Judge Charles E. Winter, a champion of land reclamation in Wyoming, in which he presented a strong argument for government ownership of the fort. The presence also

of the influential and popular ex-Governor Carey attracted wide publicity to the event that the concept alone might not have. Of even greater significance, the old-timers' picnic elevated the level of concern from a local one, expressed in Johnston's suggestion for a tourism resort, to the higher plain of federal involvement. The military school proposal was timely on one hand, with America's impending involvement in World War I. Conversely, when the U.S. actually declared war in April 1917, such notions were lost amid more pressing concerns.

Two of the important old-timers at Fort Laramie, John Hunton and Joe Wilde, were along in years and had made no secret of their desires to sell their Fort Laramie properties. As far back as 1913, both men had advertised their lands, "either jointly or separately."²¹ The Wilde property encompassed the Cavalry Barracks and the other buildings north of the New Guardhouse, as well as the meadows below the post on the left side of the Laramie River. Hunton owned all of the parade ground area, except the corner containing Quarters "A," the ruins of the Administration Building, and the Old Guardhouse. That, as well as the rest of the southeast one-quarter of the northeast one-quarter of Section 29 belonged to the Sandercock family. Hattie Sandercock's sons still farmed their lands around the fort, but after so many years at Fort Laramie, Hunton and Wilde were tired and anxious to live elsewhere.

Joe Wilde, in particular, had "been bothered considerable in trying to provide accommodations to the visitor..." Louis Carlson, a contractor who had built irrigation canals in the North Platte Valley, saw an opportunity to take advantage of the increasing flow of tourists coming up the valley en route for Yellowstone National Park and other points of interest. Improving Wilde's facilities in the barracks, Carlson planned a general merchandise store and hotel "equipped to take care of the trade in good shape." He also proposed an auto route through the fort grounds, along with a convenient

¹⁸ "A Notable Pleasure Resort." *Torrington Telegram*. June 17, 1915.

¹⁹ Merrill J. Mattes. "Fort Laramie Park History 1834-1977" (Denver, 1978), 59 (hereinafter cited as "Park History").

²⁰ "A Fourth of July Picnic at Old Fort." *Guernsey Gazette*, June 19, 1916. That Maupin had more than a passing interest in such things, was demonstrated by his appointment as the first custodian of Scotts Bluff National Monument in 1919. Mattes. "Park History," 61.

²¹ Hunton to Cohn Hunter, Cheyenne, Wyo., April, 1913, Hunton Letters, Mattes Collection.

gas station.²² Carlson bought out Wilde's interests through a series of mortgages executed during the years 1917-1919.²³ Joe and Mary Wilde, no doubt relieved to be rid of the burden of running the dance hall and other businesses at the fort, promptly moved to Lingle, Wyoming.

Hunton also negotiated a deal to sell all of the 640 acres he eventually acquired to Thomas Waters, an Omaha, Nebraska developer and former freight representative for the Pennsylvania Railroad, in the fall of 1920. Waters apparently was interested in either renting out his agricultural land to others, or hiring the work to be done. In any event, he seemed to be unconcerned with the historic structures, at least initially. In exchange for their giving up the Burt House, he allowed John and Blanche Hunton to reside in the south of the Surgeon's Quarters until May 1, 1922.²⁴ With the relinquishment of their land, both Hunton and Wilde, the last principal living links with Fort Laramie's active military era, themselves faded away.²⁵

Indeed, within a period of only 30 years after Fort Laramie's abandonment, and with active homesteading still in progress in southeastern Wyoming, tourism was already perceived as an economic boon to the region. Although there is nothing to indicate the extent to which tourists visited Fort Laramie in the years immediately following World War I, the fact that both Carlson and Waters seized upon the idea of turning it into a profit-

able venture suggests that the numbers were large enough to justify their investments.

The so-called "apostle of Oregon Trail monuments and markers," Ezra Meeker, again traveled the length of the trail in his wagon in 1920. Drumming up renewed interest along the way, Meeker may have been a catalyst in the organization of the North Platte Highway Association two years later. This organization stemmed from an attempt to link a series of public road segments into a state road, which Nebraska hoped to use as a means for securing federal highway funds. To further bolster their justification, state highway department and promoters along route in both Nebraska and Wyoming capitalized on its historical reputation as the Oregon Trail.²⁶

Plans for preserving Fort Laramie, incidental to profitable tourist developments, were advanced in 1923, when a new activist came to the forefront in defense of the old post. L. G. "Pat" Flannery, editor of the *Lingle Guide-Review* and later owner of the short-lived *Fort*

²² "Old Fort Laramie to Undergo Improvements," *Guernsey Gazette*, August 31, 1917.

²³ Land Records, Goshen County, Wyoming; Matthes, "Park History," 63.

²⁴ Hunton to Ezra Meeker, New York, NY, February 14, 1926, Hunton Letters, Matthes Collection.

²⁵ Wilde died in 1926; Hunton in 1928.

²⁶ Matthes, "Park History," 64.



Fort Laramie, 1922

Laramie Scout, took unusual interest in the fort, probably because for a time he had lived at the post, next door to Hunton. Flannery, backed by George Houser of the *Guernsey Gazette*, who had beat the drum to preserve Fort Laramie since 1916, launched a crusade to save it from oblivion. Fired with enthusiasm, Flannery's January 11 headline boldly challenged the local populace to "see to it that the 'Old Fort' is preserved as a historical spot."²⁷

By that time, Louis Carlson, who owned Wilde's property, had sold out to Henry S. Clarke, an Omaha banker. Clarke made a habit of buying properties and businesses through the use of his wife and certain trusted employees acting as fronts for his financial activities. The parcels formerly belonging to Joe Wilde, were conveyed to one of Clarke's cooperatives, Paul McDonald, in 1919. McDonald worked as a clerk in a Torrington bank. Carlson had not proceeded with his plans to the extent of making significant changes in the barracks or other buildings, and Clarke had no interest in hosting visitors. For him, the Cavalry Barracks made a suitable summer home where he could come to relax. He remodeled the rooms in the north end of the ground floor with this in mind. Clarke hired Tom and Harry Latta, farmers near Mitchell, Nebraska, to manage his agricultural interests and sharecrop the land. The Lattas were given the south end of the barracks, where Clarke had rearranged the partitions of the Wilde store to form family quarters.²⁸

Meantime, Waters, new owner of the Hunton property, revealed his own plans to create a dude ranch at the fort, using the Post Trader's Store as a museum. Additionally, he intended to construct a number of new rental cottages, a hotel, and a cafe. The centerpiece of the resort would be a golf course! That all of this would take a considerable sum of money to bring to fruition, Waters admitted. But, he told the Gering Midwest "What we should be doing is turning the tide of tourist traffic to the northwest from Ogallala, over the old Oregon Trail through Gering, Scottsbluff, and Mitchell, into old Fort Laramie with all its associations and memories, and thence on into Yellowstone National Park... It would mean more to these communities than almost any other one thing that could be imagined."²⁹ It was, of course, in Waters' best interests to promote U.S. Highway 26 as the logical route to Yellowstone. Despite his salesmanship, however, Waters was unable to attract enough investors in his enterprise to fund his plans, thus interest waned.

Public concern for Fort Laramie took on a life of its own. In 1925, George Houser got wind of a bill pending in Congress that would designate a highway, dubbed the "Oregon Trail," connecting Independence, Missouri, and Council Bluffs, Iowa, with the Pacific Coast. Houser astutely connected this proposal with the Antiquities Act of 1906, particularly the provision authoring the President to create national monuments by executive order

As word spread, several Wyoming towns mobilized to preserve both Fort Laramie and Fort Bridger by including them as logical riders on the bill relating to the Oregon Trail Highway. Locally, the Torrington Lions Club and American Legion Post No.5 drafted resolutions that were forwarded to the Wyoming State Legislature to memorialize the

U. S. Congress to set aside Fort Laramie. The language of House Joint Memorial No.4, as it was labeled, reflected for the first time not only broad support for Fort Laramie, but specifically proposed "restoring, preserving, and perpetuating to posterity this historic monument of pioneer days and making it accessible to visitors."³⁰ The intention to establish it as a unit of the National Park System was unmistakable.

As often happens, legislation that appeared to be inoffensive to anyone and on a fast-track to passage, was derailed because of disagreement over details. In the instance of Representative Addison Smith's bill, it died in committee when trail authorities and various interested members of Congress could not arrive at a consensus as to which of the various routes and branches of the trail should be included, much less the starting and ending points. Some even questioned whether or not Congress should properly or legally attempt to debate historical issues.

Just when the groundswell of public sentiment for preservation was reaching new heights, the fort was nearly destroyed. Late one evening early in April 1925, a dragline operator working the nearby irrigation canal detected a wildfire sweeping onto the fort grounds. He

²⁷ "Be a Booster for Fort Laramie," *Lingle Review*, January 11, 1923.

²⁸ "Old Fort Laramie Will be Made Big Summer Resort," *Guernsey Gazette*, October 23, 1923; McDermott and Sheire, "1874 Cavalry Barracks, Fort Laramie National Historic Site: Historic Structures Report/Historical Data Section," (Washington, D. C.: National Park Service, Sept. 1970), 4344.

²⁹ Mattes, "Park History," 66.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

**Men from
around the area
rushed to com-
bat the blaze
bearing down on
the buildings...**

immediately went to the Cavalry Barracks to notify the Latta brothers. The alarm spread to the town and nearby ranches. Men from around the area rushed to combat the blaze bearing down on the buildings from the northwest. Lines of water carriers stretched to the river so that walls and the areas immediately surrounding the structures could be wet down. Hours later they brought the fire under control, but not before it had burned the wood elements of the New Bakery, leaving only the concrete walls.³¹

The fire, more than anything else could have, pointed up just how vulnerable the old fort really was. Its defenders seemed more determined than ever to find a way to bring it under government protection. Flannery and Houser rolled up their sleeves to revitalize the effort. Judge Charles E. Winter, the same man who had spoken in behalf of creating a military school at Fort Laramie back in 1916, again demonstrated his commitment to having it authorized as a national monument. Now a congressional representative in Washington, Winter attempted to lay the groundwork. Again, it went nowhere. Winter did, however, manage to get a monument funded in remembrance of Sacajawea at Fort Washakie, where he had served as judge for seven years. That Fort Laramie was not included may have said more about political realities than historical significance.

Other events in 1926 boded well for the preservation movement. Meeker's attention-grabbing treks up and down the trail and his constant lobbying for ever more markers to commemorate it, eventually led to the creation of the Oregon Trail Memorial Association, headquartered in New York. The Wyoming chapter included as life members several prominent citizens having connections with Fort Laramie, among them Grace Raymond Hebard and popular ex-Congressman Frank W. Mondell. This organization provided an umbrella under which the efforts of several groups, including the DAR., and the Daughters of the Pioneers, were unified into a more powerful lobby. That year Congress approved the minting of six million special half-dollars to further the work of the new organization.³²

In July, a 250-man battalion of the Fourth Cavalry marched from Fort D. A. Russell, near Cheyenne, to the state fair at Douglas, Wyoming. Their route of march brought the cavalry through Fort Laramie, where they bivouacked on the parade ground. While this was not first time troops had been at the fort since it was abandoned, it was certainly the most publicized occasion.³³ Pathé News Agency even sent a photographer to capture the moment on film to be shown in movie theaters

nationwide. Both John Hunton and Joe Wilde were featured.

All of the attention focused on Fort Laramie that year caused the crusade to take a different tack. The editor of the *Cheyenne Daily Leader* trumpeted the existence of a large sum of money that had been trusted to the State of Wyoming, but no one was quite certain what to do with it. The indefatigable George Houser immediately held up Fort Laramie as a worthy cause. "We talk about the federal government setting aside this old post as a national monument, but the State of Wyoming should not relinquish it and should need no further urging to make a beautiful state park.... Our citizens, for who else can we lay it to, should be put to shame for any further neglect in preserving this fine old Fort."³⁴

By the 1920s, the fort had become more popular than ever as a spot worth visiting, not only by western history buffs, but cross-country travelers and area citizens alike. Whereas in previous years most local folks came only to partake of the Wilde dances or a July Fourth picnic, time altered the character of these visits. The no-holds-barred Wilde dances themselves were consigned to the past when Joe and Mary moved away. The fort was a serene place to picnic, to visit with friends, and to fish on a Sunday afternoon. Then too, all the attention paid to the need for preserving the place led to genuinely-interested people from other states and even foreign nations driving off the main route to see what was left of the famous old sentinel on the plains. One resident recalled that these people frequently knocked at her door to request guided tours. Doors, she said, had to be kept locked, "otherwise people would walk right in."³⁵

The fort began to assume an educational dimension when local Boy Scout troops discovered that Fort Laramie made an ideal location for campouts. When a

³¹ "Old Fort Laramie is Threatened by Fire," *Guernsey Gazette*, April 3, 1925.

³² Jording, *A Few Interested Residents*, 4.

³³ Troop D, Ninth Cavalry, making a change-of-station enroute from Fort Robinson, camped at Fort Laramie in 1894. Entry June 4, Hunton Diary, 1894; Other times when troops may have camped at the fort during practice marches were noted in Hunton to Captain A. C. Blunt, Fort D. A. Russell, Wyo., June 7, 1904; Hunton to Colonel J. A. Auger, Fort Robinson, Neb., June 15, 22 1906; and Hunton to A. G. Lett, quartermaster, 6th Cavalry, Fort Robinson, August 31, all in Hunton Letters, Mattes Collection.

³⁴ "Make Old Fort A State Park With John Higgins Trust Fund," *Guernsey Gazette*, July 23, 1926.

³⁵ Meda Hauff Hollman interview.

few schools conducted end-of-term trips to the fort, such visits became popular adventures because the students were allowed "to prowl around through the buildings."³⁶ Some latter-day fort residents became concerned when visitors were seen carrying away parts of the structures as souvenirs, but there was little they could do. Without government protection, "they were just a bunch of old buildings sitting on a piece of dry land in Wyoming," one resident said.³⁷

Although Pat Flannery acknowledged local support in the form of several monetary pledges from area organizations to supplement a state appropriation, should one be made, he continued to advocate federal ownership. "It is in truth a national monument whether we have it or whether we forget it," he editorialized. Taking a shot at Thomas Waters, Flannery quipped, "The movement to honor Old Fort Laramie will indeed be glad tidings to those who find repugnance in the destruction or commercialization of ancient and holy things."³⁸ In August, the Associated Chambers of Commerce in southeastern Wyoming intensified the clamor for preservation with a strong resolution endorsing Fort Laramie as a "national park."

That same month, the Annual Pioneers Reunion was held in Guernsey. It was a repetition of the event inaugurated ten years earlier. One of the old veterans who returned that year was W. F. Haynes, formerly a member of the Second Cavalry, who had last seen the fort in 1866. Expressing his reactions to the Wyoming state historian, Haynes concluded that, "The indifference to the fate of Fort Laramie has been defended by the want of necessary funds to save it... I feel like one who is making a final effort in... defense of an old, tried, and faithful friend who is now in the decrepitude of his years is unable to defend himself... We of today owe something to posterity, and the keeping, restoration and saving of Fort Laramie is not the least."³⁹

Also in attendance was Robert S. Ellison, an avid history buff and preservationist from Casper, Wyoming. Ellison's enthusiasm and energy were apparent in an editorial he wrote for the *Guernsey Gazette* in which he claimed that Fort Laramie, "outranks in the history of the west any other trading or military post." Most people, he acknowledged, were busily occupied with their everyday lives, but he nevertheless appealed to them "to secure and preserve as best we can the site and ruins of old Fort Laramie." Ellison candidly admitted that he was unsure just how that was to be accomplished, "but we must first resolve and want it to be done."⁴⁰

Ellison, one of the initial board members of Oregon Trail Memorial Association, wisely recognized that fed-

eral ownership was the key element in making the dream a reality. Trusts and private donations for land acquisition notwithstanding, the costs of restoration and maintenance in perpetuity would be staggering. As a businessman, Ellison "as well aware that dozens of Wyoming state and national banks had closed during the 1920s as a result of loan defaults. While the national economy may have appeared strong, the local situation was a harbinger of widespread financial disaster that did not bode well for grass-roots preservation efforts. As an executive with the Midwest Refinery, Ellison understood the costs of big business and appreciated that Wyoming alone probably could not underwrite the long-term care Fort Laramie required. Nothing would be worse than to place the fort in state hands, then have no funds to follow-through. Spreading those costs out among all of the nation's taxpayers seemed a more logical way to accomplish the goal."⁴¹

Accordingly, Ellison consulted with Horace M. Albright, assistant director of the National Park Service [NPS] to see what might be done. Albright advised that so long as the property remained in private hands, there was little the Service could do. The NPS was very reluctant to undertake condemnation procedures to acquire park lands, and then only as a last resort. However, were the State of Wyoming to gain title to such a landmark, and secure legislation authorizing the transfer of the site to the federal government, the Park Service would stand ready to accept it. Albright further recommended that the state ought to form a small landmarks committee to carry out the plan. In this way, the preservation efforts of other heritage-minded groups, such as the DAR., the Daughters of Pioneers, and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, could be united into a single force.⁴²

Acting on Albright's strategy, Ellison in 1927 spearheaded a successful effort to create a state committee--the Historic Landmarks Commission of Wyoming--

³⁶ Curtiss Root interview.

³⁷ Lewis Colyer interview.

³⁸ "Was Once the Heart of the West." *Fort Laramie Scout*, July 22, 1926.

³⁹ Haynes accurately recognized only the "Sutler Store and Postoffice, the Headquarters [Bedlam], and the Guard-house" as having been there in 1866. Letter, W. F. Haynes to Mrs. Cyrus Beard, Cheyenne, Wyo., September 1926 in *Annals of Wyoming* 4 (September 1926), 310-12.

⁴⁰ "Fort Laramie As A National Monument." *Guernsey Gazette*, August 27, 1926.

⁴¹ T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 413; Mattes, "Park History," 76.

⁴² Mattes, "Park History," 76; Jording, *A Few Interested Residents*, 4.

with Ellison as chairman, along with Warren Richardson of Cheyenne, and Joseph Weppner of Rock Springs. The Wyoming Legislature empowered the commission to inspect and evaluate potentially significant sites throughout the state and to recommend for acquisition those it considered of greatest importance.

Even though the commission was provided a small annual appropriation for expenses, there were no funds available for the purchase or maintenance of historical properties. As Albright predicted, the legislature was reluctant to assume long-term responsibility for such sites, especially in view of an uncertain economy. The key element for the future of Fort Laramie was the inclusion of a provision that the Landmarks Commission could arrange contracts with the federal government to preserve state-owned sites. The commission was justifiably proud of the "many outstanding historic sites identified with the upbuilding and bringing of civilization into the West as does Wyoming."⁴³ Their first annual report, submitted in 1928, left no question that Fort Laramie was the commission's highest priority.

Ellison and his committee moved quickly to solicit prices for the Fort Laramie tracts owned by Waters, Sandcock, and James W. Auld, another Nebraska banker who had foreclosed on Clarke's property when his banks failed in 1924.⁴⁴ However, the owners, particularly Waters, were reluctant to sell. Thomas Waters, in partnership with M. S. Hartman, an executive of the Fairmont Creamery in Omaha, had started his "restoration" of the Post Trader's Store late in 1926. In conjunction with Waters' plans to use the fort as a summer resort, Hartman wanted to convert the historic sutler's building into a museum for his collection of "mounted animal wildlife, old coins, etc."⁴⁵ The owners also trumpeted their well-intentioned, but technically disastrous restoration work, which included patching and strengthening the adobe walls with concrete, replacing the original floor; and bracing up the roof with a series of concrete pillars. Mercifully, the work stopped there, either because of a shortage of funds, or because Waters and Hartman reconsidered the profitability of the whole venture.

This afforded another opportunity for the fort's advocates to attempt to directly legislate a solution to its fate. *Guernsey Gazette* editor George Houser prevailed on the town's American Legion post to take advantage of the Legion's 1928 state convention as a platform for

proposing another state legislative memorial to Congress to "purchase, restore, and preserve old Fort Laramie" as a national monument.⁴⁶ Although the state supported the move, the House of Representatives Sub-Committee on Interior Affairs failed to act.

Disappointing as this was, the friends of Fort Laramie refused to be discouraged. The failure of various fragmented efforts apparently convinced them that the best hope for success lay with the Landmarks Commission.

That organization had been instrumental in furthering the statewide preservation effort by setting aside Forts Bridger, Reno, and Bonneville, along with the Conner Battlefield near Ranchester.⁴⁷ Citizens in both Platte and Goshen Counties got

behind the movement by setting up a local advisory committee to the commission for the express purpose of acquiring Fort Laramie. The committee, formed on October 18, 1929, was composed of seven residents, including L. G. Flannery and George Houser.

One of their first actions was to appoint two independent appraisal teams to estimate the values of the three tracts comprising the site. Once prepared, the two appraisals, only for the lands on the left side of the Laramie, came in at \$10,650 and \$15,650, respectively. Regardless, the amounts were more than the committee had any hope of raising through donations, especially considering the economic climate.⁴⁸

The Oregon Trail Memorial Association continued to be an active force in the preservation movement along the route of the emigrant trails. For example, the group exerted its influence by convincing President Herbert Hoover to proclaim the period from April 10 through December 29, 1930, as the "Covered Wagon Centennial," marking the crossing of the Smith-Jackson-Sublette wagon train from St. Louis to the rendezvous area on Wind River in southwestern Wyoming.

Predictably, Houser and Flannery seized the opportunity to stage an observance at Fort Laramie on August 15, sponsored by the Wyoming Landmarks Commis-

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.80.

⁴⁴ McDermott and Scheire, "1874 Cavalry Barracks," 44.

⁴⁵ "Omaha Mans Plans Museum at Old Fort," *Fort Laramie Scout*, September 1, 1927.

⁴⁶ Mattes, "Park History," 81.

⁴⁷ "Progress Made in Preserving Landmarks," *Casper Star-Tribune*, November 24, 1929.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 82. Soon thereafter, J. W. Auld threatened to tear down the Cavalry Barracks if something were not done soon. *Ibid.*, 82-83.

sion. "The celebration, by centering attention on old Fort Laramie doubtless will give greater momentum to the proposal that the site of the frontier trading post be acquired by the state," Houser reported.⁴⁹ A committee appointed by Ellison garnered support from communities throughout the region. Individuals representing civic and special interest groups from Torrington, Lusk, Douglas, Glenrock, Guernsey, and Fort Laramie, plus the Nebraska towns of Mitchell, Morrill, and Scottsbluff pledged their support in an organizational meeting held in Torrington early in June. Houser remarked that, "it was probably the largest and most representative group ever gathered for the consideration of plans concerning the welfare of Old Fort Laramie."⁵⁰

Despite a two-day downpour that left the roads in horrible condition and flooded New Fort Laramie, thousands of people turned out to watch bandits waylay a Cheyenne-Black Hills stage and later, Lakota Indians from Pine Ridge Reservation attack a wagon train in the best Hollywood tradition.⁵¹ The army, appropriately, was represented by a band and a battalion of infantry sent from Fort F. E. Warren at Cheyenne. The troops performed a retreat parade and guard mounting for the benefit of onlookers, ceremonies that had not been witnessed at the fort for 40 years. Even though some of the day's events had to be rearranged, or canceled altogether because of the weather, Flannery estimated that

some 23,000 people attended, arriving in nearly 5,000 automobiles. "The Old Fort lived again," he reported, "when the largest crowd ever assembled [in] the North Platte Valley gathered... to show their interest in the movement, now rapidly gaining headway, to preserve and restore this birthplace of western history as a state or national monument."⁵² Indeed, 200 people paid dues to join a new Fort Laramie Historical Society, organized as a fund-raising entity.⁵³

On hand to speak were Wyoming Gov. Frank C Emerson and Congressman Simmons from Nebraska. Famed artist and photographer William H. Jackson, who had first traveled through Fort Laramie in 1866, showed up, along with frontiersman Finn Burnett and other figures from the fort's early days. Just as the oratory began, the Pony Express put in a dramatic "surprise" appearance with the sudden arrival of a rider galloping up to the podium. While Flannery's estimate of the number of people may have been inflated, he did not over-estimate the enthusiasm shown by area citizens. Even Fox Movietone News arrived on the scene to film shorts for theater news presentations across the country.

After the excitement died down, the local committee took stock of its net gain. Although it faced the same problems it had before the Covered Wagon Centennial--no money and land owners who resented being forced out by the government--the political winds were shifting. The state legislature, no doubt at the urging of the governor, appropriated \$15,000 in 1931 so that the Landmarks Commission could attempt to purchase the land on its own, based on the appraisals obtained previously. This was exactly the approach that NPS Director Albright had outlined six years earlier. In June 1931, the commission, now headed by ex-Govemor Bryant B. Brooks of Casper, who had replaced Robert Ellison as chairman, met with Tom Waters and George Sandercock, one of Hattie's sons who was then managing the place. Over a lunch served by George's wife on the porch of Quarters "A," Waters informed Brooks that he would be willing to sell all of his acreage, 640



Cultural Resources Div., State Parks and Cultural Resources Dept.

Former Gov. B. B. Brooks, chair of the Historical Landmarks Commission, 1931

⁴⁹ "Old Timers' Celebration at Old Fort Laramie," *Guernsey Gazette*, May 23, 1930.

⁵⁰ "Plans Started for Covered Wagon Centennial Observance at Old Fort Laramie August 12," *Goshen News-Fort Laramie Scout*, June 5, 1930.

⁵¹ Some of those named were: Chiefs Big Hawk, Strong Talk, Kills Above, Little Dog, and Kills Chief. "Some Indian Chiefs at Old Fort Laramie," *Goshen News*, August 7, 1930.

⁵² "23,000 Pay Tribute to Pioneers at Old Fort Laramie Friday," *Goshen News and Fort Laramie Scout*, August 21, 1930.

⁵³ This organization had no relationship to the more recent park cooperating association

acres, for the sum of \$22,500. Brooks responded that the price not only exceeded the amount appropriated, but the commission had authority to negotiate for only twenty acres of Waters' property, being just the portion occupied by fort buildings. When Waters insisted that he wished to protect his investment by selling the whole parcel, Brooks rejoined that the state could exercise its right of eminent domain. That brought the meeting to a peremptory conclusion.⁵⁴

The Landmarks Commission interpreted Waters' stance as a statement that he was not willing to cooperate for the higher good. Since he owned the critical piece of land encompassing the parade ground and the row of buildings along its west side, Waters held the trump card. The tracts belonging to Sandecock and Auld were useless without his, and if the commission were foolish enough to purchase them, Waters could hold his for a ransom.

With its back to a wall, the Landmarks Commission initiated condemnation procedures against all three owners through the Wyoming Attorney General's Office in 1932. New appraisals were executed by court-appointed firms, with the backing of the American Legion and the Fort Laramie Commercial Club, as well as the mayor and town council of New Fort Laramie. These arrived at a total value of \$11,600 for the 55 acres the commission considered necessary to preserve the post. This fit neatly within the \$15,000 appropriation already available, with money left over for administrative costs. During the year that the hearing was delayed, the commissioners continued to hope that the landowners would settle out of court for the proffered prices, since land values were declining as a result of the Great Depression.

The same bad economic conditions brought about much greater government involvement in all aspects of American society. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" created a plethora of new government agencies for controlling the economy, developing public works projects, and making the federal government centrally responsible for numerous programs that had been handled piece-meal at lower levels. The National Park Service, although established in 1916 to administer the fledgling system of parks and monuments authorized haphazardly since 1872, had been perceived as a "western" agency having little interest in cultural properties. During the 1920s Stephen T. Mather, the first director, and his successor, Horace Albright, endeavored to change that image. They successfully pursued a strategy aimed at broadening both the young

agency's political support and its public constituency, especially in the East. In 1933 their lobbying paid off when the Park Service was given authority over the various battlefields administered by the War Department, as well as the archeological resources managed by the Department of Agriculture. Additionally, the System was expanded to include all of the monuments and other park-type lands in the nation's capital.

These acquisitions went far toward geographically balancing the holdings of the National Park System, yet little effort had been devoted to constructing a thematic framework by which historical resources could be critically weighed. In 1928, the Secretary of the Interior appointed a Committee on the Study of Educational Programs in the National Parks. Since the National Park Service had no historians of its own, the secretary called upon a prominent anthropologist at the Museum of Natural History, Dr. Clark Wissler, to serve on the committee. Wissler prepared the recommendation relating to historic sites, in which he suggested that those places and the historical materials in them should, "serve as indices of the historical sequence of human life in America."⁵⁵ This marked the first attempt to define broad historical contexts of American history that might be physically represented by designated sites assigned to the National Park Service.

Wissler's effort had no immediate effect, but the appointment of Dr. Verne B. Chatelain as the first chief historian in 1933 did. Chatelain was immediately charged with developing policies for historic sites. In his report, the chief historian recommended that since no criteria had been applied to the properties acquired from the War Department, a "system of acquiring historic sites should include all types of areas that are historically important in our national development...."⁵⁶ Chatelain therefore prepared the first criteria for the selection of historic sites, founded on a "quality of uniqueness "from which the broad aspects of prehistoric and historic American life can best be presented, and from which the student of the history of the United States can sketch the large pattern of the American Story."⁵⁷ He also emphasized that these special places, collectively, should represent the whole cloth of American history.

Concurrent with the development of a methodology for evaluating historic sites, the Roosevelt administra-

⁵⁴ Mates, "Park History," 87.

⁵⁵ Ronald F. Lee, *Family Tree of the National Park System* (Philadelphia: Eastern National Park and Monument Assoc., 1972), 46.

⁵⁶ Mackintosh, "Historic Sites Survey," 8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

tion put into place more new social programs to help jump-start the national economy. Two of these, the Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC] and the Historic American Buildings Survey [HABS], directly benefited areas already administered by the National Park Service, but only indirectly influenced the crusade to save Fort Laramie. The Service had oversight responsibilities for portions of the CCC, a huge labor force organized in military-style camps, used to carry out preservation and development work at both national and state sites. HABS put unemployed architects to work making field examinations of structures considered to have historical significance, then making drawings for permanent record. These programs, combined with Park Service efforts to develop definitions and evaluation criteria, were important elements in the formulation of a comprehensive federal preservation program.

This was expressed in legislation that resulted in the Historic Sites Act of 1935. Testifying before Congress in support of the bill, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes characterized it as "a broad legal foundation for a national program of preservation and rehabilitation of historic sites."⁵⁸ Ickes explained that this authority would permit him, through professional staff, to conduct this work in an organized, aggressive manner, rather than the disjointed effort that prevailed up to that time. This dynamic approach would result in the rapid expansion of historical properties in the National Park System, while perpetuating the active relationship with local and state governments engaged in similar work at their respective levels.

Included in the 1935 act was a provision establishing an Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments. Its members, all recognized experts in their respective fields of history, archeology, architecture, and human geography, were drawn from the private sector. Among the first eleven-member panel, coincidentally, was Clark Wissler, who had first developed the thematic approach for historical areas of the System. His appointment to the Advisory Board was important for the continuity of philosophy guiding the program. At the group's second meeting, in May 1936, the members endorsed the concept of selecting sites representative of the various phases of American history, including one titled, "Advance of the Frontier." However, they were adamant that any sites considered for inclusion in the System should be thoroughly evaluated and judged to be "outstanding examples in their respective classes."⁵⁹

As commendable as this may have been, academic historians denigrated the concept on the basis that it

was weighted heavily toward the preservation of "old things for their own sake," to the detriment of public understanding of their place in American history. Chief Historian Chatelain responded to this challenge by stating that historic sites would be used as the basis, a means, for communicating the broad historical themes in much the same fashion that academics utilized documentary evidence. Nevertheless, the academics were reluctant to concur, a factor that probably colored the relationship between scholars and Park Service field sites for many decades.

The reservations of academic historians notwithstanding, the preservation of historic sites had made significant advancements in the private sector, as well as in government circles. In fact, the decade starting in 1926 marked a renaissance for historic preservation. That period saw the development of Colonial Williamsburg, an extremely ambitious project backed by the fortune of John D. Rockefeller. It resulted in the restoration of not just a single building or even a group of buildings, rather it was the renovation of a complete eighteenth century town in all of its details. A few years later, Henry Ford inaugurated Greenfield village in Michigan, another historical project the primary purpose of which was public education. Historic house museums abounded in communities large and small across the nation.

The National Park Service had only nine historical areas under its jurisdiction at the time the agency was founded. Because there was no clear-cut authority regarding historical properties, that number increased to only twenty prior to 1933. Significantly, that year marked a real turning point when President Franklin Roosevelt signed an executive order consolidating all federally-owned national military parks and memorials, including eleven national cemeteries, along with all national parks and monuments and the National Capital Parks into a single integrated National Park System. At the stroke of a pen, the National Park Service became the sole federal agency responsible for all federally-owned parks, monuments, and memorials in the nation, thus increasing its holdings to 77 historical areas. This was a first major step that put the Service in the history business.⁶⁰ Having charged the NPS with responsibility all of the historic sites and buildings, Congress approved the Historic Sites Act two years later, giving the Service its first historians, archeologists, and historical architects. It also laid the groundwork for historical interpretation in the System.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁰ Lee, *Family Tree*, 21, 35.

These events on the national playing field portended the future of Fort Laramie. Near the end of 1933, Dan Greenburg, serving as the publicity chairman for the Landmarks Commission, suggested that the National Park Service be approached with a proposal for acquiring the fort to "tie it in with the regular park service."⁶¹ Whether or not Greenburg was aware of what was happening in Washington is not known, but he well could have been. In any event, Gov. Leslie Miller agreed to contact NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer, who was a personal friend of Miller's.

At this critical juncture, Wyoming Attorney General Ray Lee met with the legal representatives of the three fort land owners in an attempt to reopen discussions about selling their properties. Although the lawyers for Jessica Auld and Molly Sandercock, who had assumed ownership from their husbands, were willing to accept the state's offer, Waters and Hartman remained intransigent. Lee reasoned with their attorneys that the state could not legally offer more than the appraised value of the land, even if they elected to go to court. A jury verdict was exactly what Waters and Hartman desired. In a lightning-fast trial scheduled the following week, local jurors awarded them \$500 an acre. Of course, their decision may have been influenced by landowners in the jury box who had their own reasons for seeing Depression-era land values increased. Even though the latest legislative appropriation had been passed for \$25,000, an amount that would have come close to covering the mandated price for the 55 acres, the governor had unilaterally decreased the authorization to \$15,000 before affixing his signature. Waters and Hartman knew of this action beforehand, which no doubt prompted them to stand firm on their price.⁶²

The movement that had taken various levels and avenues during the years since 1915, once again descended to the grass roots. Deprived of Robert Ellison's dynamic leadership and drive to save the fort, the Landmark Commission lost heart in the project and turned its attention elsewhere.

However, Flannery, Houser, and others in Wyoming who championed Fort Laramie renewed their determination to see it preserved. In what seems to have been an obsession by that time, the local leaders convinced Governor Miller to appoint yet another special committee, apart from the

American Heritage Center, UW

Landmarks Commission, for the sole purpose of preserving the fort. This "Old Fort Laramie National Park Area Commission," as it was called, included three members in addition to Houser and Flannery. Putting their shoulders to the wheel were Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard, Dr. G. O. Hanna of Lingle, and Charles O. Stafford, the manager of the Wyoming Department of Commerce and Industry.⁶³

Although single-minded in purpose, the committee realized it was at a loss to know where to begin after all of the previous attempts had failed. At Flannery's suggestion, the committee petitioned Wyoming Sen. Joseph C. O'Mahoney to request guidance from Secretary Ickes and Director Cammerer. Unfortunately, nothing happened, despite the promised support of the Washington officials. This may have been because the NPS wanted to avoid an already sticky situation that had stalled with a failed attempt at condemnation.

The committee faced a paradox. It was highly unlikely the Park Service would buy the land, considering the economic realities of the times. On the other hand, while the State of Wyoming might have been able to salvage the negotiations to buy the property, it was doubtful the state could afford to restore or operate the

⁶¹ Matthes, "Park History," 89.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 89-90.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 94-95.



Gov. Leslie Miller (left) was relentless in his efforts to preserve Fort Laramie. He was helped in Congress by Wyoming Sen. Joseph C. O'Mahoney (right). The two Democrats worked with the NPS to gain federal designation for the site.

place, both of which the public demanded. The answer, as Flannery may have realized, lay in the sage advice Horace Albright had imparted to Ellison back in 1925. The solution was to utilize the President's authority to proclaim national monuments under the Antiquities Act of 1906. If the state could manage to purchase the fort, with the assurance the NPS would immediately take it off their hands through a presidential proclamation, Congress might be more easily levered into appropriating funds for its maintenance.

The plan needed a catalyst to start the ball rolling. That spark was provided by Merrill J. Mattes, a young historian posted at Scotts Bluff National Monument. Mattes was thoroughly familiar with the historical significance of Fort Laramie and its surviving buildings. Early in September 1936, Hillary A. Tolson, assistant director of the Park Service, visited Scotts Bluff during a trip to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Mattes, already personally committed to seeing Fort Laramie preserved, suggested to Tolson that since his route would take him right by the fort, he should stop to see it. When Tolson expressed his interest in doing so, Mattes volunteered himself and avid Oregon Trail historian Thomas L. Green, a resident of Scottsbluff, to serve as guides. Inexplicably, during all of the various celebrations and Landmark Commission maneuvers, no one had bothered to invite any high-ranking NPS officials to come see the fort.

The visit proved decisive. Tolson was deeply impressed with what he saw and with the role the fort had

played in western history. The assistant director even went so far as to say that if the State of Wyoming could acquire the fort, the NPS would assume responsibility for its administration. True to his word, Tolson telephoned Associate Director Arthur B. Demaray in Washington soon after his visit to convince him that the time was right to take action on Fort Laramie. Director Cammerer, now armed with the 1935 Historic Sites Act and a growing professional staff to carry out its mandates, was most receptive to expanding the agency's historical properties.

Only a week after Tolson's impromptu visit, the NPS announced publicly that it would be willing to establish the area as a unit of the Park System, were it donated to the government. Demaray notified Donald B. Alexander, coordinator of CCC activities at Omaha, that he was to enter into direct negotiations with the State of Wyoming, and at the highest levels. Gov. Miller, elated with the sudden NPS interest in Fort Laramie, informed Alexander that he was uncertain just how Tom Waters would react to the news. But, NPS staff members in Omaha already had checked into Waters's financial situation to discover that he would probably be willing to reduce his price for the land.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁶⁵ Mattes, who was fairly close to these events, assumed this was worked out during a meeting among NPS and Wyoming state officials and members of the local committee. Mattes, "Park History," 106-07.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 108.



Group standing in front of Old Bedlam. Photograph by Joseph Weppner, *Historical Landmarks*

Miller now scented victory and pulled out all stops to secure the fort. When the members of the Landmarks Commission expressed their reservations about gaining Waters' cooperation and their unwillingness to pay an unreasonable price, Miller simply bypassed them. He even drove to the fort to personally discuss the situation, and to sniff the political winds at the confluence. Flannery provided the governor with the names of several individuals he thought would be willing to negotiate with Waters and the others. Miller also invited local businessman and fort-supporter Robert J. Rymill to chair yet another committee for that purpose. This time, however, the committee was granted wider latitude to acquire more acreage, up to 200 acres in fact, with a ceiling price of \$25,000. The new proposed boundary probably was suggested by NPS planners in Omaha to provide a wider protective buffer around the historic buildings.⁶⁵

On January 17, 1937, Rymill informed Governor Miller that the negotiators and the land owners had reached an agreement on a purchase price of \$24,844.75, barely under the limit, but nevertheless within bounds. Even though Miller had earlier sidelined the Landmarks Commission, he was again in a position to utilize their services as an instrument to handle the sale. At a subsequent meeting a few days later, Warren Richardson, a member of the committee, proposed that the Legislature appropriate a total of \$27,500. This, he explained, would cover state expenses in the interim period required to move the fort into the hands of the Park Service. This might have been a stumbling block in prior years, but not in 1937. Miller enjoyed near universal popularity with the voters, and just as important, exerted powerful influence over Democratic legislators. Not only was there an absence of opposition, factions on both sides of the body competed for the honor, if not the credit, of preserving Fort Laramie. Representatives from no less than eight Wyoming counties, led by Goshen and Platte, joined in sponsoring the bill, introduced to the Ways and Means Committee early in February. To no one's surprise, it flew through the legislative process and was enacted on February 20, 1937.⁶⁶

His signature hardly dry on the bill, Governor Miller sped off to Washington to secure a personal guarantee from Director Cammerer that the Park Service was indeed prepared to follow through on its promise. The director assured Miller that everything was in place and that a presidential proclamation accepting Fort Laramie would be forthcoming. Miller left nothing to chance, however. Before leaving Washington, he attended a meeting of the Advisory Board to make certain that

there would be no hurdle raised relative to the fort's significance for inclusion in the National Park System. The Washington Office staff of the NPS had already covered those bases and the Council advised the governor that Fort Laramie's historical importance had never been questioned.

That done, Miller dashed back to Cheyenne, where he placed the final responsibility in the hands of the Landmarks Commission. Empowered to make the purchase, the commission members presented the official vouchers, in the sum of \$25,594.75, to the state auditor for payment. The legislative resolution also authorized the Landmarks Commission to convey the land, 214.41 acres, to the National Park Service, an act carried out on the last day of March. Fittingly, a grand celebration was staged on the fort's parade ground on July 5, 1937.

In 1890 the army had forsaken the old post as being of no further use. It had indeed outlived its purpose as a military post, just as it had outlasted the trappers, emigrants, gold-seekers, and Indians. Nevertheless, even its decline, it served other needs for cattle-men and homesteaders, not all of them good for the fort itself. But, survive it did. While the land remained much the same as it had always been, the buildings suffered. As Historian Mattes observed, "Actually, we should not express disappointment that so much of Fort Laramie was lost, but rather surprise that so much of it has been saved."⁶⁷ Enough was saved to serve as a tangible, irreplaceable reminder of the nation's heritage and those who have gone before. The meanings and values of events at the confluence remain the obligation of those to follow.

⁶⁷ Mattes, "Fort Laramie: Guardian of the Oregon Trail," *Annals of Wyoming*, 17 (January, 1945), 17-18.

Douglas C. McChristian, an authority on the frontier military, is a historian with the National Park Service. He now lives and works in southern Arizona, but he once served as superintendent of Fort Laramie National Historic Site. This article, the third and final installment in a series published in *Annals*, is based on a longer study on Fort Laramie's history from the fur trade era to modern times. The book will be published by the National Park Service.

Book Reviews

Significant Recent Books on Western and Wyoming History Edited by Carl Hallberg

Religion in the Modern American West.

By Ferenc Morton Szasz. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000. 270 pp. *Illus., notes, bib., index. Cloth, \$35.*

Reviewed by Amanda Porterfield, University of Wyoming

A welcome antidote to the chronic neglect of religion in historical studies of the American West, this handy volume describes the contours of American religion west of the 100th meridian, which runs through the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Combining extensive research in the cutting files of regional public libraries and state historical societies with knowledge of relevant scholarly literature, University of New Mexico History Professor Ferenc Morton Szasz argues that religion has shaped the growth of many western communities and that, since the 1960s, religious trends in the West have come to dominate national trends. The absence of a single mainstream religion in many parts of the West gave many different religious groups room to establish themselves and develop freely, Szasz argues. The open spaces and natural beauty of the landscape contributed to religious individualism, and this contributed to a growing national interest in personalized forms of spirituality.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I surveys the period from 1890 to 1920 and focuses on the crucial role religious groups played in establishing hospitals, schools, and welfare that enabled communities to grow. In contrast to the East and Midwest, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant groups coexisted on more or less equal footing in many towns and cities while Latter Days Saints created their own fantastically successful Zion in and around Utah. In San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Denver, Jews often led the way as philanthropists and community builders. Catholics established firm and extensive social bedrock, especially in California and the Southwest. Protestants also contributed to the social infrastructure of western society but were often divided among themselves, no less than Jews and Catholics, into ethnic groups.

Part II surveys the period from 1920 to 1960, which saw an influx of conservative evangelicals and the flourishing of Pentecostal fervor, especially in the Southwest. The international Pentecostal celebrity Aimee Semple McPherson based her headquarters in Los Angeles. Meanwhile, local religious leaders made life better for many people. The Irish Catholic Brother Mathias Barrett founded the order of Little Brother

of the Good Shepherd and established homeless shelters Los Angeles and Albuquerque, while the Reform Rabbi Isadore Budick promoted understanding between Christians and Jews in Oklahoma. Heavy migration to the West Coast fed the growth of many religious institutions, although the census of 1950 showed Washington and Oregon had the nation's highest rate of religiously unaffiliated people.

Part III covers the last four decades of the 20th century and attends to the sharp rise of religious conflict in the West. Respect for Native American religions increased, as did conflict between developers and environmentalists. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and his followers attempted to take over Antelope, Oregon, but they were run out of town. In the most horrible religious conflict to emerge from the West, Jim Jones led more than 900 followers from his People's Temple in northern California to death in Jonestown, Guyana.

If the West generated more than its share of religious conflict in the United States during the late 20th century, it also led the way in developing new forms of religious creativity. Robert Schuller pioneered new expressions of Christian outreach and entertainment at Crystal Cathedral in conservative Orange County as did, in a very different style, the charismatic Black activist Cecil Williams at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco. As this lively volume demonstrates, Westerners did not hold to convention as much as their eastern compatriots. But their religious experiments and enthusiasm for spirituality shaped the landscape of American religious life.

Selling Yellowstone: Capitalism and the Construction of Nature.

By Mark Daniel Barringer. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002. 248 pp. *Illus., maps, notes, bib., index. Cloth, \$29.95.*

Reviewed by Shannon Bowen, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

There is no question that the national parks of the United States have been contested spaces on a variety of fronts since the designation of Yellowstone in 1872. From the rights of concessioners to the nature of its use, the United States' national park system has been marketed and re-marketed to accommodate the changing tastes of a now international visitor population. Mark Daniel Barringer asserts that the United

States Department of Interior, though its management of the national parks, has attempted to sell to this population an ever-evolving set of goods. But just what argument is Barringer selling his readers in *Selling Yellowstone*?

Barringer states in his introduction that the national parks, and particularly Yellowstone as the first of its kind, offered Americans an image of the "Old West [that] proved itself useful in shaping popular ideas about what an American, as well as America as a nation, was." (p. 1). As the frontier proceeded West across the North American continent, the parks presented a nostalgic reminder of what Americans dreamed their homeland once appeared to be. Barringer's introduction and his conclusion function as an exegesis of national park symbolism, and he states that his narrative "is about the people who constructed Yellowstone's many identities and shaped popular perceptions of the park over the years, and their reasons for doing so." (p. 7). However, this work is not concerned with how those identities and perceptions were "constructed," a term Barringer is quite fond of using, but rather with the evolution of business operations and government policy regarding Yellowstone National Park.

Barringer offers an exhaustive and well-researched history of concessions in Yellowstone from the park's establishment until the mid-1960s. He discusses the relationship between government officials and individual concessioners, as well as the effects of World War I and World War II on activities within the park. Barringer also deals with how various concessioners worked with park superintendents, interior secretaries, and environmental pundits to create and recreate Yellowstone's built and natural landscape to suit tourists' changing tastes. While this line of discussion might lend itself well to an explanation of what those tastes were and how they came to be that way, Barringer resists that temptation, relying instead on offhand remarks and brief digressions on national park iconography. These offhand comments and brief digressions undermine what would otherwise be a convincing and articulate pitch about how private enterprise influenced public land use decisions.

Readers expecting *Selling Yellowstone* to be an intellectual and cultural history will be disappointed. Its subtitle, *Capitalism and the Construction of Nature*, is misleading in that it emphasizes the role that nature would play in Barringer's narrative. In fact, nature is but a minor actor in this story, which is part of the author's point. While he might have been better served by avoiding the parks' symbolic implications altogether, his discussion of those implications provides at least a partial backdrop for his explication of Yellowstone's business and government history. Contextualization is a slippery slope, and Barringer's navigation of it is at times clumsy. Further, with the immense volume of scholarship on what nature means in national parks, there is little he could add to the dialogue. The story he succeeds in selling about Yellowstone is one that, until now, has been more obscure. It is a story that entwines political promises and the proverbial bottom line, one to which the public is not ordinarily privy. And in exposing this story, Barringer contributes a great deal to the continuing Yellowstone debate.

Shot Down! Capital Crimes of Casper.

By Charlotte Babcock. Glendo: High Plains Press, 2000. 149 pp. Illus., bib., index. Paper, \$13.95.

Reviewed by Kim Winters, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

Charlotte Babcock's book *Shot Down! Capital Crimes of Casper* is, as the title implies, about ten capital crimes (each chapter is about a specific event) in Casper from 1890 to 1914. In her forward, Babcock describes her book as a collection of stories that "are told as if by the drawing-room fireplace of someone who was there." Without a doubt, Babcock's book is an enjoyable read, written in a relaxed writing style, and it is easy for the reader to become, as Babcock says she did, caught in the drama of the "murders, crimes of passion, [the] lynching, barroom brawls [that] . . . exploded with the birth of the new town of Casper, Wyoming." Sometimes the text reads more like a historical novel, which perhaps adds to the ease with which the reader can become "caught up" with the "characters." The author's need to tell the "real" story and her writing style may frustrate some readers with this book.

Babcock says she intends her book to be a factual account about early criminal history in Casper. While she seems overwhelmed by the need to tell the "truth," she also comments on the difficulties that have stood in the way of her doing so. One challenge for her is historical research. She sees this as "an intriguing exercise in dogged detection, and in some measure, interpretation." But the process was personally frustrating as she found numerous inconsistencies in local sources and needed to explore them enough to pick out the "correct" one. One wonders what she thought historical research and writing were all about.

Babcock says that as a result, she had to interpret events. While this could have led to interesting examinations about various issues or situations, Babcock stops just short of doing so and, instead, offers just the facts. She provides little analysis about the historical significance of these events and no explanation about the context within which they took place. In the end, the reader comes away with a limited view about the subject matter.

Babcock also relies heavily on secondary sources. Her primary sources are two newspapers – the *Derrick* and the *Tribune* – and the lack of other primary documents may annoy some readers who enjoy delving into old records. Similarly and perhaps most surprising for a historical text is the lack of citations or footnotes. Only newspapers are cited in the body of the text. If Babcock is writing this book in the feel of someone sitting in front of a fire telling a tale, then she does just that. It is not often that during a story telling that the teller pauses to reference citations.

Although Babcock's method of historical writing will not appeal to everyone, it should not be dismissed out of hand. This is an enjoyable book and a highly accessible introduction to early criminal history in Casper. While it may not offer everything some historians would like to see or rather it may stop tantalizingly short of this, it is a fun look at some of the drama in early Wyoming.

Dreamers and Schemers: Profiles From Carbon County, Wyoming's Past.

By Lori Van Pelt Walck. Glendo: High Plains Press, 1999. Illus., bib., index. Paper, \$14.95.

Reviewed by C. Fred Williams, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Those interested in making lists and identifying "the best" in a given category as the turn of the century seems to have inspired, may take a lesson from this author and her book on Carbon County, Wyoming. Organized as one of the Territory's original five counties, Carbon County has had a storied past. The author attempts to capture that past with vignettes on thirty-three individuals who "had some stake in forming the County" (p. x). These brief biographical entries, approximately 2000 to 35000 words in length, highlight the entrant's career and comment on their connection with the county. The longest entry is reserved for Governor Fenimore Chatterton who followed a checkered path from New York through law school at the University of Michigan on his way to being the state's chief executive at the turn of the century. Among Chatterton's notable accomplishments was his refusal to commute the capital murder conviction of range detective Tom Horn to life imprisonment.

Chatterton narrowly edged legendary mountain man Jim Bridger and notorious cattle rustler Ella (Cattle Kate) Watson for the most space in the book. The shortest entries are reserved for husband-wife team Richard and Margaret Savage and land/mining partners Ed Haggarty and George Ferris. Each gets about 1200 words. Four vignettes are about women and one is reserved of African American Isom (Ned) Dart. In addition to Bridger, other national notables include outlaw Butch Cassidy and transportation magnet Ben Holladay.

Individuals less well known but still important to Wyoming and Carbon County, include French army officer Philippe Regis de Torbriand. Arriving in America to participate in this nation's Civil War, Torbriand distinguished himself in battle and was brevetted to Major General before the war was over. He remained in the U.S. Army following the war, and his last years as a soldier were spent as commander of Fort Fred Steele. Another subject, Thomas Tipton Thronburgh, was also connected to Fort Steele, serving as "one of the youngest military officers to earn the rank of Major" (p. 47).

Most professions present in Carbon County are also represented in this book. Mining, ranching, land speculating, and law enforcement dominate the occupations represented. However, most individuals were engaged in multiple activities (hence the title) and seldom stayed with one job for long. The most common "cross-over" career came from outlaws who settled down to become lawmen.

Individuals recounted in this volume came or passed through all regions of Carbon County. However, those whose activities occurred at or near one of three places – Fort Fred Steele, Encampment, and Saratoga – get mentioned most often. Fort Steele, founded by Colonel Richard I. Dodge, provided military protection for the transcontinental railroad and

extended its mission to monitor Indian activities after the railroad was completed. The town of Encampment evolved from a fur trapper rendezvous site, and Saratoga, known for its spring water, began as a stage stop and was named for an earlier settlement in New York.

This book makes interesting reading. But it is difficult for the general reader to understand the rationale for how the characters were selected. The author, a native of Nebraska and trained as a journalist, has done a good job in gleaning data from personal memoirs, popular histories, newspapers, and other miscellaneous publications. However, the narrative does not focus on serious scholarship and is more in the category of story-telling. Even so, it is a delight to read and even serious scholars will find tidbits of information to satisfy their intellectual curiosity.

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High and Dry: The Texas-New Mexico Struggle for the Pecos River.

By G. Emlen Hall. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002. 288 pp. Illus., notes, index. Cloth, \$39.95; paper, \$21.95.

Reviewed by Leslie Shores, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

The struggle for water in an arid region is a conflict as old as time. The fight over Pecos River water is a 20th century version of that battle, a contest played out in the legal realm more than anywhere else. Former water-rights attorney, now University of New Mexico law professor, G. Emlen Hall tells the story about the Texas-New Mexico combat for Pecos River water as a lawyer, small farmer, and devotee to the river itself. Hall provides a masterful summary of *Texas v. New Mexico*. It was a convoluted, drawn-out court case that pitted Texas and New Mexico engineers, lawyers, politicians, and irrigators against each other in their attempts to gain control over Pecos River Water in the arid Southwest. The author tells about New Mexico's stake in the litigation. Although Texas had a huge interest in it, Hall admits that as a New Mexican, he did not see the downstream stakes as clearly or develop them as deeply.

The case of *Texas v. New Mexico* is full of arcane details only a water engineer or water-rights lawyer could appreciate, but Hall is adept at sizing the issues down to a layman's level. His descriptions of the grand personalities involved in the case and the intricate maneuvering they perform bring richness to a story that could easily be bogged down in legal and engineering jargon. The book is as much a history of how a desert region uses its limited water resources as it is a description of a case played out in the federal courts. But there is no happy ending here. Hall recounts the battle over Pecos River water from its relative beginning, but as he relates, the clash continues into the 21st century with as much rancor and confusion as ever.

The Pecos River has its headwaters in eastern New Mexico and runs through West Texas. As an upstream state, New Mexico has had a somewhat proprietary view of the Pecos.

Hall's story begins in the 1890s when New Yorker Francis G. Tracy arrived in Carlsbad, New Mexico to engineer a reclamation dream that would deliver Pecos water through dams, diversions, and delivery systems to parched acres in southeastern New Mexico. By the turn of the 20th century, Tracy and his partners released prospectuses showing plans to irrigate more than one million acres of land between Roswell, New Mexico and the Pecos River. They were defeated in their attempts by the highly uncontrollable Pecos and by a lack of financial backing.

Wild dreams of limitless water resources were also played out in Roswell, a town that has the good fortune to lay upon an artesian basin. Drilling for irrigation purposes was rampant in the 1910s through the mid-1950s with little knowledge that the wells were sucking away groundwater that normally would have fed the Pecos, and the downstream Texas farms. Hall's interview with a second generation Roswell farmer provides a valuable viewpoint from a New Mexican who continues to farm his land through irrigation water from artesian wells. The author does an excellent job of showing the tenacity of New Mexicans who depend on an unreliable river to make their living and their fierce protection of their water rights.

By the 1940s, Texans got wind of the groundwater drilling in Roswell and grew suspicious that Texas was not receiving its fair share of Pecos water. A dispute arose forcing all sides to come together for some type of agreement, imperfect though it may have been. The result was the 1948 Pecos River Compact which gave an empirical formula for dividing the water of the Pecos. Unfortunately, the river did not cooperate with the formula. Texas's expectations that New Mexico should follow the ambiguous formula and New Mexico's attempts to evade the requirements of the formula led to the 14-year court case beginning in the mid-1970s.

Under the administration of New Mexico State Engineer Steve Reynolds, there was one key principle to guide New Mexico water policy. That principle was that there should be

scientific management of limited water to achieve the most economically efficient beneficial use of the state's scant supplies. The author indicates that "use" was the operative word in the State Engineer's office. Reynolds believed that water unused was water wasted. His policies toward water use were relatively simple to enact in the early days of his career in the mid-1950s, when most engineers and farmers were still unaware of how man's activities were depleting the river flow. But by the 1970s, Reynolds's key principle was vying with new knowledge about river flow along with a whole new range of competing key principles: water for Texas, water for federally protected aquatic endangered species, water for other uses, and water for the Pecos River itself. Using his skills in diplomacy, native charm, iron determination, and slavish hours, Reynolds kept his antiquated policy afloat until his death in 1990. Steve Reynolds's strong personality dominates Hall's book. Hall worked as a lawyer for Reynolds in the State Engineer's office and alternated between admiration and abhorrence for Reynolds's policies and methods. In the end the case of *Texas v. New Mexico* survived Steve Reynolds as well as two U.S. Supreme Court-appointed special masters, one who resigned in the frustration and another who died in office. The case lasted from 1974 to 1988, although, as the author relates, the problems that spawns it have not yet been resolved.

Halls' story ends on his own plots of New Mexico land where he raises chile, basil, and pumpkins, some for the commercial market and some for his own personal satisfaction. He remarks that he ponders the history of irrigation in the region as he watches river water flow from 18th century irrigation systems through his headgates and into his small fields. The artificial condition, he comments, has been in existence so long it seems natural. This contemplative approach and Hall's special insight as one who has witnessed the western water wars close-hand are reflected in the book and make for a well-thought out, engaging, informed account about the history about water use in the 20th century New Mexico.

Recent Acquisitions in the Hebard Collection, UW Libraries

Compiled by Tamsen L. Hert

The Grace Raymond Hebard Wyoming Collection is a branch of the University of Wyoming Libraries housed in the Owen Wister Western Writers Reading Room in the American Heritage Center. While it is easy to identify materials about Wyoming published by nationally known publishers, it can be difficult to locate pertinent publications printed in Wyoming. The Hebard Collection is the most comprehensive collection on Wyoming in the state.

If you have questions about these materials or the Hebard Collection, contact Tamsen Hert by phone at 307-766-6245; by email, thert@uwyo.edu or access the Hebard HomePage at: <http://www.uwyo.edu/lib/heb.htm>.

Bagley, Jerry.

Daniel Trotter Potts, Rocky Mountain Explorer, Chronicler of the Fur Trade and ... The First Known Man in Yellowstone Park. Rigby, ID: Old Faithful Eye-Witness Publishing, 2000. *Hebard & Coe* F 722.4 .P68 B345

Potts was a member of the Ashley-Henry expedition and provided reports of the travels up the Missouri, Big Horn and Wind Rivers. He provided the earliest accounts of the area of Yellowstone but was unidentified for nearly a century. The author located the original letters and was able to identify the author of these early accounts.

Carter, Robert A.

Buffalo Bill Cody: The Man Behind the Legend. NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000.

Hebard & Coe F 594 .B63 D37 2000

The first "full-scale biography" of this western icon in more than 30 years.

Cassidy, James G.

Ferdinand V. Hayden: Entrepreneur of Science. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

Hebard & Geology QE 22 .H3 C37 2000

A history of the development of the Hayden Surveys and their relationship to the practice of science.

Hagan, Barry J.

"Exactly in the Right Place": A History of Fort C.F. Smith, Montana Territory, 1866-1868. El Segundo, CA: Upton & Sons, Publishers, 1999. *Hebard & Coe* F 739 .F48 H343 1999

The third of the military posts along the Bozeman Trail, Fort C.F. Smith is primarily remembered for the Hayfield Fight, August 1, 1867. The author has thoroughly researched the military records to provide this account.

Huston, Hayden H.

Daniel, Wyoming: The First Hundred Years 1900-2000: A History of Daniel and Surrounding Areas. 2 vols.

[Salt Lake City, UT]: Agreka Books, 2000.

Hebard & Coe F 769 .D36 D36 2000 v.1-2

"This book is a remembrance of the pioneer settlers of the upper Green River valley." Includes many photographs and maps.

Meeks, Harold A. *On the Road to Yellowstone: The Yellowstone Trail and American Highways, 1900-1930.* Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Inc., 2000.

Hebard & Coe HE 356 .Y4 M445 2000

A history of one of the overlooked early highways in the United States.

Petzoldt, Paul K.

Teton Tales and Other Petzoldt Anecdotes. Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 1995.

Hebard & Coe GV 199.92 .P48 P489 1995

A collection of reminiscences from this Wyoming climbing pioneer who died in 1999.

Pitcher, Goldie Norah.

McFadden: The Town They Called "Camp." [Rawlins, WY?: s.n., 200?]. *Hebard & Coe* F 769 .M38 P583 2000z

A history of a once-thriving Wyoming oil camp town. Pitcher, a former resident, now lives in nearby Arlington.

Waite, Thornton.

The Yellowstone Bears of the Union Pacific Railroad. Columbia, MO: Brueggenjohann/Reese; Idaho Falls, Idaho: Thornton Waite, c2000.

Hebard & Coe HE 1739 .W358 2000

Bears have always been associated with Yellowstone National Park. In this small publication, the author reveals the story of the advertising bears used by the Union Pacific Railroad between 1923 and 1960.

Forthcoming Articles in Annals--

The Winter, 2003, issue will feature a series of biographies about Wyomingites--some famous, some infamous, and others who were fascinating but not well known. Among the subjects will be Laramie Plains rancher George Harper, Big Horn Basin murderer Bert Lampitt, and Estelle Reel, the first woman ever elected to a statewide office. Also featured will be a story by William R. Dubois based on an oral history interview of schoolteacher Rosemary Quinn.

PAST PRESIDENTS, WYOMING STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Wyoming State Historical Society was organized in October 1953. The following are past presidents of the Society:

1953-55: Frank Bowron, Casper
1955-56: William L. Marion, Lander
1956-57: Dr. DeWitt Dominick, Cody
1957-58: Dr. T. A. Larson, Laramie
1958-59: A. H. MacDougall, Rawlins
1959-60: Thelma G. Condit, Buffalo
1960-61: E. A. Littleton, Gillette
1961-62: Edness Kimball Wilkins, Casper
1962-63: Charles Ritter, Cheyenne
1963-65: Neal E. Miller, Rawlins
1965-66: Mrs. Charles Hord, Casper
1966-67: Glenn Sweem, Sheridan
1967-68: Adrian Reynolds, Green River
1968-69: Curtiss Root, Torrington
1969-70: Hattie Burnstad, Worland
1970-71: J. Reuel Armstrong, Rawlins
1971-72: William R. Dubois, Cheyenne
1972-73: Henry F. Chadey, Rock Springs
1973-74: Richard S. Dumbrill, Newcastle
1974-75: Henry Jensen, Lysite Casper
1975-76: Jay Brazelton, Jackson
1976-77: Ray Pendergraft, Worland
1977-78: David J. Wasden, Cody

1978-79: Mabel Brown, Newcastle
1979-80: James June, Green River
1980-81: William F. Bragg, Jr., Casper
1981-82: Don Hodgson, Torrington
1982-83: Clara Jensen, Lysite Casper
1983-84: Fern Gaenslen, Green River
1984-85: Dr. David Kathka, Rock Springs
1985-86: Mary Garman, Sundance
1986-87: Ellen Mueller, Cheyenne
1987-88: Mary Nielsen, Cody
1988-89: Loren Jost, Riverton
1989-90: Lucille Dumbrill, Newcastle
1990-91: Scott Handley, Pine Haven
1991-92: Dale Morris, Green River
1992-93: Dr. Walter Edens, Laramie
1993-94: Sally Vanderpoel, Torrington
1994-95: Ruth Lauritzen, Green River
1995-96: Maggi Layton, Riverton
1996-97: Dr. Mike Cassity, Laramie
1997-99: Patty Myers, Buffalo
1999-2000: Dr. Mike Jording, Newcastle
2000-02: David Taylor, Casper
2002- : Dick Wilder, Cody

Wyoming Picture

From Photographic Collections
in Wyoming



This scene of Gillette's Main Street must have been photographed on a holiday, a Sunday, or a very quiet business day! The picture probably dates from the 1890s, soon after the town was founded and before cars made their appearance on Wyoming Main Streets. American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming photograph.



DATE DUE

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